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THE HELPER AND AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS.

Dissertation

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by

John H. Ashworth.

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PREFACE

This monograph is the outgrowth of investigations carried on by the author while a member of the economic seminary of the Johns Hopkins University. The chief documentary sources of information have been the trade union publications of the Johns Hopkins Library. Documentary information, however, has been supplemented by personal observations and interviews with leading trade unionists in Baltimore, and with the secretaries of a number of national unions.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A helper, as the term is used in this study, is a person employed to help carry forward the work of the skilled journeyman or journeymen under whose supervision to some extent he works. The essential marks of a helper as here defined are two: (1) he is employed to promote the work of another or others. (2) he is supervised in his work to some extent by the mechanic or mechanics whom he assists. These marks of identification are extremely variable. A helper's assistance to a journeyman may be as remote as that of supplying material, or so immediate that he works hand to hand with him at all times. Also, the supervision exercised by a journeyman over a helper may extend no farther than the giving of directions as to the placing of material, or it may be so close that the helper does no work for which he is not responsible to the mechanic who is directing him.

Based upon the nature of their work and upon their relation to journeymen in the performance of the same, helpers may be roughly divided into three classes: (1) remote or indirect helpers, (2) helpers proper and (3) advanced helpers.¹

By a remote helper is meant an assistant who does not come into intimate contact with journeymen. A workman of this class is, as a rule, unskilled and is known in union circles as a laborer.

1. All or none of these classes may be found in a single trade.

He does preparatory and after work which is necessary to but usually not claimed by journeymen as a part of the work of a trade. In other words, his work ends or begins at the lines marking the jurisdiction of a trade. Such a helper owing to a close connection in work must of necessity come frequently under the supervision of a journeyman. The hod carrier for example, is a helper of this class. He is a laborer who neither does nor helps to do any of the work claimed as bricklayers' work. He is confined to the carrying of brick and mortar which work is necessary that the craftsmen may proceed with their duties. As a rule the hod carrier is under the jurisdiction of a foreman but incidentally, he receives orders from the journeyman whom he assists.

Remote helpers take various forms in the different trades and industries. In the building and in the metal trades where strength and endurance are required, they are, for most part, mature men. In many industries such, for instance, as textile mills, garment factories glass bottle establishments and printing offices, this class of helpers is composed largely of boys, often spoken of as the small help class. Not infrequently it happens that these indirect helpers are former journeymen who on account of intemperance, injury, or other causes, fail to secure positions requiring skill or carrying with them much responsibility.

HELPERS PROPER.

This class of helpers consists of those whose work is so closely allied with that of the journeymen that it is necessary, or at least desirable, that they be under the direct supervision of journeymen a majority or all of the time. This group of helpers according to

the primary purpose for which they are employed may be subdivided into (a) helpers who assist mechanics at work which cannot be performed by one man, and (b) helpers whose employment is due wholly to a division of labor.

In many trades there is work which one man cannot do, and the sub-division of which so that part can be done by one person and part by another or others, each being independent in the performance of his particular duties, is impossible. The process is a unity and must be executed as such. In many cases there is no clear-cut assignment of work for the helper, what he does being left to the exigency of the case and the discretion of the journeyman. Each steam fitter, for instance, must have an assistant, because he cannot by himself do the physical labor necessary for performing the work, neither can the lifting and adjusting of the heavy fixtures be divided into component parts. The journeyman and his helper work hand to hand, the helper doing that which the steam fitter orders him to do.

In other cases, especially in operating machinery, there is a well defined line between the work of a helper and a journeyman, but the necessity for the use of helpers is the same as in the case of steam fitting. For example, on a quadruple printing press it is necessary to have about six men, one of whom has charge of the work, all of the others being assistants commonly known as press assistants. Each assistant has a specific work to do, but the unified work of operating the press requires that all the work be in charge of one man. Another example of this type, which is different in some respects from the pressman's assistant, is the helper to the elevator constructor. This helper is a kind of specialist who can do a specific part of a

complex trade. He may be something of a machinist, an electrical worker or an operator of a hydraulic press, all of which are parts of elevator construction. As in the case of the printing press, it is essential that some person have general supervision of the entire work. This person is the journeyman elevator constructor who is master of all parts of the trade.

The second group of helpers proper, like that of the remote helper class, has arisen as a result of a division of labor. In tile setting, for instance, the ordinary duties of the helpers are to mix the cement mortar and carry it to the tile layer, soak the tiles when such a process is necessary, to grout (fill joints) the tile work after it is finished, to clean the work off, and some times to cut tile when pieces are required to fit a certain space. Obviously, all this work could be done by the tile setter himself, for there is no part of the work where a journeyman and his helper work hand to hand at work which one man alone could not do. It is simply a matter of a division of labor wherein a comparatively unskilled man assists a skilled one by relieving him of particular parts of a trade.

Helpers proper who are employed primarily to assist journeymen at heavy or complex work may come in time to do the more simple parts of the trade which requires but one workman. Where this is true, the above division based on the purpose of employment disappears. For instance, a boiler maker's helper was originally employed to assist a boiler maker at heavy lifting and in putting together the parts of a boiler which absolutely require two or more workmen. Gradually this helper has come to perform the simpler parts of boiler making. The extent to which this has reached is indicated in a typical agreement between the Davenport Locomotive Works and the

helpers of that shop. This agreement stipulates that "helpers' work shall be the operating of shears, punches and drill presses, threading stop bolts, attending tool room, heating on flange fires, tapping out holes for the bolts and running in stay bolts, firing and testing boilers and all work helping boiler makers and boiler makers' apprentices in the performance of their various duties."^{1a}

ADVANCED HELPERS.

By advanced helper, as this term is to be used, means one who is doing a journeyman's work, but under the supervision of a journeyman. He is simply a helper proper in his transition stage to that of a full mechanic. An improver in tile laying, for instance, is a helper proper who has been given an assistant of his own, and is doing the work of a journeyman, but usually under the supervision of a competent tile layer. In short, he is a helper on probation. The junior or improver in the plumbing trade, and the advanced or apprentice helper in the blacksmith trade are similar to the improvers of the tile layers. The improver in the carpenters' trade, the handy laborer in brick laying, and the "handymen" in the machine and boiler maker shops, while doing journeymen's work and using journeymen's tools, are usually confined to certain kinds of work. The chief difference of an advanced helper of this type and a helper proper, whose existence is a direct result of a division of labor, is that the former is not so directly under the supervision of a mechanic as is the latter.²

^{1a} Boiler Makers Journal, Oct. 1908, P. 726.

² Advanced helpers do not always work under the supervision of journeymen, but since they more often do, they are in this study considered as included within the scope of the definition given to the term helper. An advanced helper is an assistant of a different type from the helper proper. The former is a helper on a particular job; he assists by actually doing the same kind of work as the journeyman does. The latter assists a mechanic by relieving him of certain parts of the work of a trade.

The helper class as herein defined, classified and described, includes all auxiliary workmen or assistants in or connected with a trade or industry. Inasmuch as this use of the term is not in harmony with its use in many trades, it is necessary in order not to be misunderstood, and in order to set forth the helper problem in all its phases, to explain some of the different uses of the term common in labor circles.

There is a group of trades in which auxiliary workmen are divided into two and some times three classes, one of which is technically known as the helper~~y~~ class. Thus in a machine shop a person known as a laborer sweeps the floor, carts material about the shop, removes the finished product, and performs other general work of like nature. Another group of workmen called helpers are men of some skill, or at least men of some experience, in a machine shop. These helpers work in closer contact with the machinⁱst than do the laborers. They get tools for the journeymen, oil, and help to operate machines, supply material to the machines and do other work which brings them under direct supervision of the mechanics whom they assist, and in a general way only under the journeymen of the shops. Still another ^{group} of auxiliary workmen known as "handymen" or specialists are employed in machine shops. "Handymen" originally meant, as the name signifies, one who could make himself useful in various ways about a shop. Sometimes he would directly assist a mechanic; at other times he would be engaged in work requiring a comparatively low degree of skill, in which case he frequently worked almost independently.

It is thus seen that these three classes of auxiliary workmen, laborers, helpers and handymen correspond respectively to remote helpers, helpers proper, and advanced helpers, as previously described, but that the first and last of these are not included within the term

As the machinists use it.³

Unions, as a rule, never consider any workman a helper unless the work of that person falls within the jurisdiction of a trade. From the union standpoint, trade lines separate the laborers from the helpers. But, inasmuch as these lines are more or less arbitrarily drawn, and subject to frequent change, any attempt to follow out this distinction would result unsatisfactorily. To illustrate, the United Association of Bricklayers and Masons do not extend their jurisdiction to the carrying of brick and mortar, and consequently, do not consider the hod carriers as their helpers. However, in Porto Rico, where the bricklayers are organized under the American Federation, the trade lines are extended and the hod carrier is considered the bricklayer's helper.⁴

3 In boiler making, besides the laborers, helpers and handymen, as described above, there is a class of auxiliary workmen known as holders on, who hold bolts while a mechanic fastens them.

In printing press rooms there are three distinct types of helpers proper, viz: feeders, feeders helpers and press assistants, all of whom assist and are under the supervision of journeymen who are in charge of the presses. The feeder's helper is a sub-helper.

Likewise in other trades, helpers are variously classified and named. This makes it impractical to try to follow union usage in a study of auxiliary workmen.

4 Unions are frequently bothered in deciding when to consider laborers as auxiliary workmen in a trade, and hence to know when to apply the term helper to them. In 1910, when the International Brotherhood of Teamsters became the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Helpers and Stablemen, it was proposed that all garage men be included under the term helper, but after some discussion, it was decided to add the work stablemen, and thus restrict the meaning of helper from what was just proposed. See Convention Proceedings, 1910, p. 10.

The helper, especially when organized, is often thought of not so much as an assistant, but as one who is organized by the union as a helper; not so much as one who holds a definite position but as one whom the union regards as capable to fill a certain position. In other words, a helper is looked upon as one who is branded by a union as a helper, despite the work he may do. This truth was impressed upon the writer when he was shown through a large locomotive shop by a machinist who pointed out a number of persons as helpers, though they are apparently assisting no one. On asking for an explanation, it was learned that these men pointed out as helpers, were doing the work which machinists were supposed to do, but that the guide considered them helpers, because that was the union stamp which they bore. In perusing labor journals, one is impressed with the frequency that this signification is given to the term. The following from the report of Organizer Cummings, of the Steamfitters, is quite typical--- "A shop of one Mr. Miller using mostly helpers".⁵

It now remains to differentiate the helper from two other classes of workman with whom he has been more or less confused. These are (1) apprentices, and (2) workmen. Subordinate in rank to other workmen on a job or in a shop, but who bear neither of the essential marks of a helper.

⁵ The Steam Fitter, May, 1908, p. 5.
A helper is often defined on a basis of skill and time of service rather than from the nature of the work he does. Thus an agreement between electrical workers and employers of New York defines a helper as "A man who has worked at the electrical construction business more than two years, and has passed the examination provided for herein and has been admitted to the union." See Annual Report, New York Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 1908, Part 1, p. 251.

With the decay of the apprentice system and the development of a helper system of learning a trade, the lines of cleavage between a helper and an apprentice have become somewhat obscure and in popular usage the distinction which should be made between the two has not been carefully observed. To grasp fully the problems growing out of the intricate relation between the helper and the apprentice, and to clear up the confusion arising therefrom, three things are necessary; (1) a study of the intricate relations themselves; (2) a study of the confusion arising thereby; and (3) the making of a clear distinction between the two.

To show the intricate relation between helpers and apprentices, let us first trace the development of a helper system of learning the plumbers' trade, which is quite typical of the development of the system in many other trades. In years past, the major portion of a plumber's work was in his shop where the material was gotten in shape for construction or repair work. In the performance of these shop duties, such as in making of lead traps considerable skill was required, and consequently considerable instruction and practice at the actual work was necessary for any one who aspired to be an efficient plumber. As the trade was a remunerative one, boys willingly apprenticed themselves to the master plumbers and worked for little pay aside from the instructions they received. These apprentice boys were primarily learners under instruction and incidentally assistants in the shops where they worked. Gradually a change took place. As the plumbers' work increased in volume, the amount of shop work relative to the entire work to be done, decreased. Large manufacturing establishments began to make, ready for construction, every article needed in the plumbing industry. Since these articles were made in uniform sizes, plumbing became largely a matter of putting together

properly these manufactured articles. The boys or the men hired to accompany plumbers for the purpose of carrying the tools and material needed on a job and rendering such assistance as the plumber might desire, had, previous to the falling off of the shop work, little opportunity to become practical plumbers and were scarcely thought of as having an intimate relation to the apprentice boys. But the shop work having largely disappeared, it became the chief duty of the apprentice as well as of the helper, to assist plumbers on construction work. Thus, the boy employed as a helper and the one under contract to be taught the trade were placed at identically the same kind of work. Not only did the apprentice come to be a helper, but likewise, the helper became a learner of the trade just the same as if he were an indentured apprentice. This is due to the fact that a helper could not render the assistance required of him unless he at the same time, received some instructions as to this work. Besides,, he had the same opportunities to observe the work of the skilled journeymen as did the apprentice. By this change in the character of the work in the plumbing industry, the helper and the apprentice came to have two marks in common, viz: both were assistants and both were learners. Confusion was the almost inevitable result.

When it became possible for boys to learn the arts of plumbing without contracting for long periods at low wages, to learn a trade at which they received little instruction and which they could learn as well while serving as helpers, they naturally preferred not to enter into any apprentice contract. Inasmuch as it was customary for each plumber to demand a a helper,⁶

⁶ See Official Journal, December, 1908, p. 10.

The boys wishing to learn the trade felt pretty sure of an opportunity to do so without being subject to the restrictions and low wages imposed by the customary apprenticeship contract. In the course of time, those learning to be plumbers were in fact, if not in name, helpers and not apprentices.

So long as the helpers could not learn the trade, the journeyman plumbers made no objections to their employment. In fact (as has been stated) journeymen refused to work without them, since they wished to be relieved of rough unskilled work. It was not long, however, until it became evident that this system unrestricted would tend to produce an over crowded market. The United Association of Plumbers became aroused and set about to check the evils growing out of the use of helpers. At first it was the policy to try to clearly distinguish the apprentice from the helper, to limit the number and advancement of the former, and to abolish the latter.⁷ This policy failing to accomplish the ends for which it was designed, was abandoned and a policy adopted which involved a complete reversal of former tactics. This new policy was to bring the helper within the scope of the apprenticeship regulations.⁸ The helper was declared to be an apprentice and if the combined number of apprentices and helpers employed by any firm exceeded the number of apprentices allowed the firm by the union it was considered a violation of the apprenticeship regulations. Since this change in the policy of the United Association of Plumbers, the term helper is either used as it is in the International Constitution as synonymous with apprentice or as being included within the term apprentice as is shown from the Report of the Industrial Commission. John S. Kelly, President of the Plumbers Gas,

7 Constitution 1897, p. 25.

8 Convention Proceedings, 1899, p. 26.

Steam and Hot Water Fitters, when before this Commission in 1900, on being asked "How long a term of service must an apprentice be taken?"⁹ replied: "Four years as a helper and two years under instruction."

This may be further illustrated by an agreement between the master and the journeymen plumbers of Chicago, in 1903, one clause of which states that : "The term of apprenticeship shall be five years, three years of that time as helper and the following two years with tools."¹⁰

This confusion in the use of the terms helper and apprentice is character^{istic} practically all the skilled trades where helpers are used and where the unions seek to maintain apprentice regulations. Since the results have not been the same in the different unions, a few more examples will be given to illustrate other phases of the complications of the terms. Among the electrical workers and elevator constructors where , just as in the plumbers' trade helpers are learners, the attempt to distinguish between the two has resulted in a peculiar use of both which is almost an interchange of their meaning as they are used in some other trades. The constitution of the Electrical Workers of local 28 of Baltimore provides that the period of apprenticeship shall be two years and that an apprentice shall come in as a helper at the end of the second year.¹¹ An agreement between electrical workers , local number three of New York defines an helper as , " A member who has passed an examination for a work specified by the union and has worked at the trade two years," while an apprentice is defined as , " a boy registered by the union who is employed to do errands ; carry material to or on the job,

9 Report of the Industrial Commission, Vol. VII, Page 966.

10 Page 9, Section 11.

11. Constitution, 1910, p. 12. The elevator constructors in some localities make practically the same distinction between helper and apprentice.

atten. lookers or assist journeymen in testing out for no other purpose." This agreement further states that "Apprentices must not encroach on the work of the helper or work with tools." ¹² The above distinctions are not observed in all localities. In some places helpers and apprentices are regarded as synonymous. Thus, in an agreement of Local Union 128, of Binghamton, it is stated that an apprentice or helper shall serve three years at the electrical business before he shall be allowed to become a journeyman. ¹³

The Blacksmith and Boilermakers have sought to remedy the confusion growing out of the use of the terms helpers and apprentices by adopting a new term "Helper-Apprentice". ¹⁴ This is applied to those helpers who are given recognition as learners by being promoted to advanced work. This serves to distinguish them on the one hand from the helper who has never been so promoted, and on the other hand from the regular indentured apprentice. The tile layers sometimes use the same word except combined in reverse order, with a slightly different meaning. To them, the "apprentice-helper" is simply one who has passed through the lower stages of a helper, and is merging into the state of a full mechanic. ¹⁵ This failure on the part of labor unions to properly distinguish helper and apprentice, and especially the tendency to class as apprentices all learners of a trade, disregarding the absence of any contract between the employer and the so-called apprentice, has led investigators to overlook the real distinction between the two classes of workmen. For instance, Dr. Motley, in his treatise Apprenticeship in American Trade Unions, quotes from the Iron Moulders Journal as follows: "These berkshires were a peculiar institution. They were boys employed by moulders to assist them at their work, ^{but} nomilly as helpers, but in reality they were apprentices

¹² Annual Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1908, p. 330.
¹³ Ibid. Page 249.
¹⁴ See Blacksmiths Journal, Jan. 1907, p. 23. This term is used quite frequently in agreements between Blacksmiths and Boilermakers and their employers.
¹⁵ Tile layers and Helpers Journal, April, 1907, pp. 19-20.

and every moulder had to use at least one of them.¹⁶ Dr. Motley accepts this statement and treats the "berkshires" as apprentices, though they were a pure type of helper. They assisted the moulder at his work, and were under his direct supervision at all times. The only sense in which they could be called apprentices is that they were learners of a trade.

The proposition before us now is to clarify this confusion by making a clear distinction between a helper and an apprentice. Two prominent writers¹⁷ on labor subjects in a study entitled "Conditions of Entrance to the Principal Trades", gives warning that, "The labor known as helper must not be confounded with the apprentice," and then proceed to give some distinction whereby the one may be known from the other. They say: "The latter (apprentice) is generally a youth undergoing a training to become a journeyman. He uses a journeyman's tools and in most cases is permitted to do a journeyman's work. The helper, however, except in a few trades receives no instruction and is restricted to certain kinds of unskilled employment. As we have already pointed out, he is not allowed to use a journeyman's tools, and in many trades is not under the jurisdiction of the journeymen's union."¹⁸

The broad generalities drawn here together with their indefinitely stated exceptions evade rather^{than} solve the proposition proposed for solution. Doubtless, this is due to an effort to conform to union usage of the term helper, which is not at all uniform. But even if judged from that standpoint, the above distinctions are far from correct. In the first place, there is an apparent assumption that helpers are more advanced in age than are apprentices. According to union regulations

16 P. 22

17 Walter F. Weyl and A. M. Sakolski.

18 Bulletin U. S. Bureau of Labor, No. 13, p. 768.

apprentices are often taken from the ranks of the helpers, and are therefore older than the helpers.¹⁹ In the second place, the helper is not restricted to unskilled work, but in many trades is allowed to pass gradually from the position of an unskilled laborer to that of an efficient mechanic.²⁰ In fact, as has been shown, the work of the apprentice and that of the helper are often identical. Only by restricting the term helper to mean an unskilled laborer and applying the term apprentice to all learners of a trade, would this distinction hold true. In the third place, the distinction based on the kind of tools used is not satisfactory.

19 Boilermakers and Machinists provide that as many as fifty per cent of the apprentices may be taken from the ranks of the helpers.

Printing pressmen require that all apprentices be taken from the assistants. In several of the occupations in the Pottery industry the union demands that all apprentices be taken from the helpers. Most apprentices about glass bottle factories are taken from the brightest and quickest of the boy helpers.

This same thing is more or less true in many other industries.

20. This is now true with respect to the Steam Fitters, Electrical Workers, Elevator Constructors, Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, Tile Layers, Garment Workers, and some branches of the pottery industry.

In a few trades where the tools are the insignia of the craftsmen, the helpers are prohibited by the union from using them. The instances, however, are so few that they form the exceptions, not the rule. There are other trades where the helpers do not have tools of their own, but they frequently use those of the journeymen, with whom they work, in order that they may render the assistance required of them. Finally, the question of organization of these workmen has no bearing whatever as to whether they are helpers or apprentices.²¹

These same writers state in another paragraph in the same ^{article} ~~that~~ "the essential distinction between this(helper) system of promotion and that of apprenticeship is that no formal instructions are given the helper, and no definite period of training is required."²² The same criticism ~~is~~ made with reference to the other rules for distinction also apply here. Helpers in order to properly execute their work, must be given some instructions, though such instructions may not be given with a view to making the helper a mechanic. When in some trades where helpers are the legal learners of the trade, journeymen are supposed to give them instructions just the same as though they were apprentices. As to a definite period of training, with the exception of the Elevator Constructors, the writer has not found a single instance where unions, local or national, representing a skilled handicraft has ~~not~~ made provisions ^{to become mechanics} for helpers, without specifying the time which they are required to serve as helpers.²³

21 See Chapter of this study on Organization.

22 Bulletin, U. S. Bureau of Labor, Vol. 13, P. 712.

23 For typical requirements as to time of service demanded see Constitution International Association Steam, Hot Water and Power Pipe Fitters, 1908, p. 13, Sec. 39. Blacksmith's Journal, Oct. 1908, p. 39, Constitution Electrical Worker's, 1901, Art. 1, Sec. 1.

With respect to all the above distinctions, it may be said that they are based on union regulations, which may or may not be enforced. At any rate, they form no criterion by which to distinguish helpers from apprentices. There is a vast difference between saying that a helper is and saying what rules shall govern his work.

Since all these distinctions fail to distinguish, and add confusion to confusion, resort to definitions is again necessary in order to set our bearings for future discussions. A helper, as has been defined for guidance in this study, is any person employed to help carry forward the work of skilled journeyman or journeymen, under whose supervision to some extent he works. On the other hand, an apprentice is one who by promise, indenture or covenant, for a specified time, is being taught the trade by a master of the trade, or by some one in his employ. The only essential distinction between two classes according to these definitions lies in the purpose of employment. The helper, though he may be a learner of a trade, is primarily employed because he supplies an economic need and in fixing his wages, nothing is deducted in lieu of instruction given. On the other hand, an apprentice may assist a journeyman, but the primary purpose for which he is engaged is that he may be taught the trade, and thus supply an economic need in the future, though he may incidentally supply such a need in the present. ²⁴

In large manufacturing establishments owing to the minute subdivisions of labor there are many occupations, and consequently, many classes of journeymen, some of whom are subordinate in rank to others. It now remains to distinguish a subordinate workman who is a helper from

24 The relations between apprentices and helpers are often so intricate and the union policies, with respect to the two, so interlinked and confused, that this extended discussion is deemed necessary for a proper understanding of the auxiliary workmen in their relation to unionism.



one who is not a helper. From conditions of entrance to the principal trades, previously referred to, we quote "Progression within a trade permits a boy to move from the simpler to the more complex operations at a rate commensurate with his diligence and dexterity, thus giving those who have extraordinary ability or who apply themselves honestly to their work and opportunities to pass rapidly thru the various stages of apprenticeship. Consequently, the so-called "helper system" of entrance to a trade, as shall be explained later, is more adapted to modern conditions than the apprenticeship system. By the 'helper system' is meant the process of 'moving up' the person desiring to become a proficient mechanic in a trade or occupation, the 'helper' as a beginner does the simpler kind of work, but as he gains experience he gradually acquires sufficient application and proficiency to enable him to work upon the more complex processes of the craft."²⁵

Evidently the writers have failed to discern one of the essential marks of a helper, which is his subjection to some extent to the authority of a fellow workman. Since in some industries composed of several branches or trades there are many laborers subordinate in rank to other workmen, but who are not in any way under their supervision, and who are gradually promoted to higher positions, it is obviously incorrect, or at least not discriminative to term the 'helper system' a 'moving up' process.

The distinction between a helper and a workman who progresses from one of the lower to one of the higher trades of an industry composed of several branches of trades, can be best shown by a comparison of these two classes of workmen as they appear in two different trades.

P In the pottery industry a jiggerman, for instance, contracts to do work at so much a dozen. Instead of doing all the work of making the finished product himself, he operates the jigger, a machine for shaping the articles being manufactured. A "batter out" cuts off the clay, flattens it out, places it on a mold so that the jigger can proceed with his work. Also a mold runner carries molds containing the green ware to the dry room, and later, after removing the ware he brings them ^{back} to the "batter out" for use again. These assistants are his helpers since they assist him at a work which is considered as a unit and are under his supervision and responsible to him for the proper performance of their respective duties. In the manufacture of boots and shoes, which industry furnishes an extreme case of a division of labor, the work of making an article is not considered ^{as} a unit. Piece work is done, but "by the piece" is meant the performing of a single operation rather than the turning out of a completed article. All workmen are hired by the firm, and are responsible in no way one to another. Cutting, fitting, shaping, finishing and treeing are processes independent of each other. A person engaged in one of these operations is in no sense a helper to the other. In both the pottery and the boot and shoe industry there is a "moving up" of the brightest, most capable workmen. In one case those being "moved up" are helpers, in the other case they are not.

CHAPTER 11.

CHARACTER AND PURPOSE OF UNION POLICIES.

The policies of organized artisans with reference to helpers vary widely according to the varied conditions in the different trades and according to the particular class of helpers under consideration. For convenience and clearness in presentation, union policies will be discussed under the following heads: policies pertaining to; (1) the employment and promotion of helpers; (2) the payment of helpers; and (3) the organization of helpers. The first two of these will receive attention in this chapter; but the third, because of the desirability of considering in connection with it certain phases of our subject which do not fall within the scope of the Character and Purpose of Union Policies, will be reserved for treatment in another chapter.

1.

Policies Pertaining to the Employment and Promotion of Helpers.

The remote helper, as described in Chapter 1, of this study usually receives but little attention from the unions representing the more skilled trades, either with respect to their employment or promotion. This is due to the fact that the unions and the employers have harmonious views as to the need for, and the work of this particular class of helpers. The unions favor their employment because it relieves the mechanic of doing unskilled and oftentimes arduous labor, and at the same time, does not work any immediate evil to their respective crafts. The employers desire to use this general help for the

very simple reason that it is better economy to have low grade ^{work} performed by a cheap class of workmen rather than ^{by} high priced mechanics. Especially, is this true where the mechanic, when working alone, will lose much time in changing from one kind of a work to another, or where it would necessitate that expensive machinery stand idle for a time. In fact, by tacit consent of the unions and the employers the use of the remote helpers has been so regulated that there has been little necessity for many specific union rules concerning them. They are for most part a negligible factor among organized mechanics. For example, the hod carrier at the present day is such a well established factor in supplying the brick-layer with material, and so seldom shows any disposition to become a brick-layer, that the question concerning his employment or non-employment is nil. The brick-layer would not for a moment think of carrying his own brick, nor would the contractor think of allowing him to do so. The rareness of instances in which this group of laborers is referred to in conventions and labor periodicals marks their insignificance as a union problem. However, in a few trades where there is a possibility and a tendency for the remote helper to encroach upon the work of the journeymen, there is union opposition to his employment. Thus, in New York City prior to the year of 1903, owing to the fact that they had so much trouble with helpers whose very name had become odious to the union the journeymen plumbers persisted in the extension of their jurisdiction to the carrying of all fixtures to their proper place of erection, regardless of the number of the story where such fixtures were to be used.¹ It has been the

1. Annual Report, New York Bureau of Labor, 1903, p. 515

policy of the United States Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners to minimize the number of general laborers on any job. While this is partly due to the fact that the carpenter, in many instances, can better select the material which he needs for a specific purpose,. The main reason, no doubt for this policy of decreasing the number of carpenters' laborers is that their use tends to develop "Bar and hammer carpenters", whose presence in large numbers is no little source of trouble to the union.

The explanation as to why the remote helper is more likely to encroach upon the work of the carpenter than is the hod carrier upon the work of the bricklayer is, that the duties of the carpenter and the carpenters' laborers are more diversified than are the duties of the bricklayer and the hod carrier. Where the work of this class of helpers as well as the work of the mechanic, is very specific there is less danger of such helpers making inroads upon the work of the craftsman than there is in trades where the duties of each class cannot be so definitely outlined.

In some instances, a union representing an industry rather than a trade, and not stressing any kind of apprentice regulations, embraces within its ranks all the workmen of the industry, both skilled and unskilled. In such cases, the remote helper, while a member having equal rights and privileges with more advanced workmen is not a factor of special concern. Thus, the general help about a mine, carriage and wagon factories, and many other similar industries, while numerous, does not figure prominently as a distinct group of workmen which calls for special union regulation.

Union policies with reference to the employment and the promotion of the helpers proper are not at all uniform in the different trades. This non-uniformity as in the case of the remote helper, is due to the fact that the employment of helpers is more inimical to the welfare of the journeymen in some trades than in others. In accordance with their views as to the necessity for or the desirability of using helpers proper, also with respect to their views as to the nature and the extent of the restrictions placed upon the use of such helpers as employed, unions may be divided into three general classes, viz: (1) unions representing trades wherein the helper is not a powerful factor in producing evils and which demand them for their journeymen; (2) unions which are practically indifferent as to the employment and promotion of helpers, leaving this entirely in the hands of the employers; (3) unions which recognize potent evils in a helper system of work, and which therefore either try to abolish the helper or, though recognizing the need for and sometimes demanding his assistance, place strict limitations upon his employment work and promotion.

In a few trades where the nature of the work is such that helpers lighten materially the physical duties of journeymen whose positions and salaries are not seriously threatened by reason of the presence of the helpers in the industry or trade, the employment of helpers is not only encouraged but is often demanded by the unions. For example, the teamster has much more hard work to perform when working alone than when he is supplied with a helper or helpers who, under orders of the driver, do a large part of the loading, unloading and carrying of heavy material, and who perform other manual drudgery which falls within the jurisdiction of the Teamsters. For instance, the driver of an ice wagon keeps the accounts with his customers and tends to all other business

matters connected immediately with the distribution of the ice. In short, he is a business "go-between" for the employer and the customers. The driver also aside from the driving of the team, does other manual labor, such as the blocking out of the ice, but the bulk of the carrying of the ice from the wagon to the customers is done by the helper. This helper while assisting a driver readily learns traffic rules, streets, location and names of customers and disposition of team. Consequently, if his personal characteristics, business and educational qualifications are sufficient, he soon is capable of becoming a driver himself. Two facts, however, keep him from being regarded as a menace by the driver. In the first place, those other than helpers could readily take charge of teams if there should be a disagreement between an employer and his drivers. In the second place, many helpers are negroes or ignorant white men, whose qualifications keep them from flooding the market with the higher grade teamsters, who form the backbone of the union. Naturally then, the teamsters desire helpers, for by using them they have much to gain and little to lose. Because of the great diversity in the number of helpers needed by the teamsters connected with different industries, the National Union takes no action as to the demands for specified numbers of helpers, but it is the policy of local unions to demand helpers sufficient in numbers so that the driver will not be burdened with excessive physical labors. Also, as has been indicated previously, the Teamsters while favoring the promotion of helpers to fill vacancies in the ranks of the drivers, do not assert any definite policy as to this, and the matter of promotion is left entirely to the employers.

Likewise, in certain industries where many grades of workmen are employed and where anything approaching an apprentice system would be extremely impractical, if not impossible, a helper system both of work and of learning a trade, is encouraged. For instance, in certain branches of the iron and steel industry, the men work in teams which are composed of a definite number of laborers of which the "underhands" are helpers.³ In addition to these regular helpers, the union often demands that extra help be furnished for work which is especially heavy. Thus, we find the demand coming from local lodge number 34 that, "Help be given to heaters and catchers on all files weighing 160 lbs. and upward."⁴ Also local union number 13 asks that, "When making blooms on files weighing 27½ lbs or over on much mills, the firm shall furnish extra help for hooking and straightening."⁵ It is the desire of the leaders of the International Union of Iron, Steel and Tin workers that helpers be promoted in regular order according to time of service, provided the skill and capabilities of those longest in service will justify such promotion. However, except in the early days of the Union, no definite stand has been taken by the International Union on the question of promotions, advancement of workmen for most part being left to the employers. The work of the helper is, when possible, made very definite, but this is not done to hamper in any way his opportunities to secure a higher position but rather to make all work more systematic ~~and thus~~, and thus avoid confusion and

3 Convention Proceedings 1877, p. 30

4 Convention Program, 1889, p. 17,

5 Convention Program 1889, p. 30.

misunderstanding.⁶

It is the general rule that helpers are a fertile source of trouble to unions which try to enforce an apprentice system. This is because a helper proper, who works in close contact with a mechanic will, to some extent, learn to do the work of the one whom he assists and thus come into conflict with apprentice regulations. Consequently such unions are usually more or less hostile to the unlimited employment of helpers. However, there are some exceptions as to workings of this rule. For instance, in the blowing of glass bottles it is understood if not demanded, that blowers be supplied with a mold boy and a "cleaner off". The mold boy operates the molds into which the glass is blown and the "cleaner off" removes the particles of glass which adhere to the blowers rod each time he blows a bottle. The intimate relation of these helpers to the blowers does not give them any considerable insight into the art of glass bottle blowing, because the blowing process requires muscular movements which are invisible and consequently can only be learned by actually doing his work. The chasm between the blower and the helper is so broad that the helper cannot cross it at a single leap, nor can the process of blowing be divided so as to form stepping stones on which he can cross. Therefore, the bottle blowers not only require helpers but they do not place any restrictions on their work because such is unnecessary. Doubtless another reason for

6 Thus in 15th. Conv. Pro. p. 2974, the work of the Melters' helpers is outlined as follows: "The first helper shall help charge, make bottoms, clean and sharpen bars, help dig out tapping hole, tend gas and reverse furnace as often as directed by melter. First helper shall assist second helper at top hole when closing.

The second helper shall bring in ore, help charge, help dig out top hole, clean close tapping hole, bring in and properly prepare for manganese, bring in limestone, clean and sharpen bars and see that furnace tools are taken care of. He shall also take ore and manganese left back to bins and keep charging floors swept clear about middle front door."

the attitude of the bottle blowers with respect to their helpers is due to the fact that they work by the piece and if they themselves should perform all low grade work like operating molds and cleaning pipes, it would tend to decrease their earnings; for it would be difficult to maintain, for the entire process of making bottles, a standard rate as high proportionally as is maintained for the skilled process of blowing.

Just as it is to the interest of the blowers to have helpers, so it is to the interest of the employer, so long as blowers are plentiful, and the standard rate maintained, not to put on blowers who are inexperienced. For owing to the slowness of an unskilled blower and to the fact that he turns out many faulty bottles, the employer gets less returns from the helpers than he himself pays. This is because the helpers, as well as the blower, waste time in the manufacture of many worthless bottles; And besides, their pace of work is set by the blower whom they assist. Consequently, while the Bottle Blowers do not favor the promotion of any helpers, other than those who become regular apprentices, it is not necessary for them to assert and give special emphasis to their views on this point. These same forces tend to make less tense the opposition by unions to the use of helpers representing other trades where the piece system prevails.

The industries represented by the unions which are comparatively indifferent as to the employment and promotion of helpers, usually include many grades of laborers such as are found in textile mills and mines. In such industries owing to the multiplicity of occupations and

the constant change brought about by the introduction of new machinery, occupational lines are not tightly drawn and the unions give their attention to other issues, leaving largely to the employers all the questions pertaining to the division of work, and the employment and promotion of workmen. Consequently, though helpers are employed, no friction is generated thereby and their existence is scarcely recognized in a casual study of the union journals and convention proceedings. For illustration, the Western Federation of Miners makes eligible for membership, "all persons working in and around the mines, mills and smelters." ⁷In this list of workmen are many classes of helpers, such as trackmen's helper, blacksmith's helper and smelter's helper. Yet from reading the constitution of this union one would not become aware of their existence.

The unions wherein the questions relating to the employment work and promotion of helpers have been of the greatest concern and wherein there has been more or less union action designed either to abolish them or to restrict their numbers and advancement are the following: Blacksmiths, Boiler Makers, Elevator, Constructors, Electrical Workers, some Branches of the Glass workers, Iron Molders, Machinists, Printing Pressmen, Plumbers, Potters Sheet Metal Workers, Steam Fitters, and Tile Layers. Before taking up specific policies of these unions, it will be well to consider from the union standpoint some characteristic evils growing out of the use of helpers, because the nature of these evils and the extent to which they prevail in any union determine the policy of that union in its efforts to alleviate or destroy them. The two chief objections to the existence of a helper class in the trades where helpers have to some extent at least, objectionable features, may be summed up in the following statement: helpers are conducive to the disintegration

⁷ - Constitution, Art. 1. Sec. 1. - - - - -

led to the overcrowding of a trade.

In the first place, the presence of a helper class in a trade produces or accelerates trade disintegration. It has been the policy of the unions enumerated above, Potters excepted, to hold their respective trades intact, that is not to allow any grading of work or workmen. The employment of helpers is not favorable to the carrying out of this policy. The introduction of machinery and machine made articles has been the great factor in destroying the unity of work in the skilled trades, but the presence of helpers has been a moving force in making possible a grading of workmen corresponding to the different grades of work to be done. When a sub-division of work is made in a shop or in an entire trade, if there be a class of men familiar enough with the work to take over the more/^{un-}skilled parts of it, the employers will naturally favor such a division; because in this way it will be possible to have the work done more economically. On the other hand, if there be no men in the shop and especially if there be none connected with the trade except full fledged mechanics, and a limited number of apprentices, it is quite probable that the union will be able to enforce its contention that the trade should be held intact or at least that all the work should be done by those recognized by the union as full mechanics or as apprentices. The helper/^{proper} and the advanced helper are the ones who are in a good position to step in and take work which the mechanics claim should be done by themselves only.

There is this same tendency to have helpers encroach upon the rights of journeymen whose work is made up of jobs scattered here and there, and requires for its execution varying degrees of skill on the part of the workmen. If there be a job of work which a helper can

So if there be a helper in the shop he is sent to do it, and the work left ^{for} mechanics is thereby diminished. Such a policy if unrestricted would gradually destroy the unity of a trade. From many sources come complaints that this infringement upon the rights of the journeymen is every where going on. Especially the Blacksmiths, Boiler Makers, Machinists and Plumbers have grievances along this line. President Kelly of the International Association of Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters, gave utterance to a typical arraignment of the helper when he said: "Contractors send jobbers out when they get knowledge enough to do the work themselves, while they could not go lay out systems, they can do and put in closets; and while employers pay them at the rate of six dollars a week, they charge the customers as much for these men as though they had worked fifteen or twenty years at the business."⁸

In the next place, says the union journeymen, the use of helpers in a trade produces mechanics or semi-mechanics far in excess of the demands of the trade. If each mechanic in a trade work with a helper, and if each helper, as he will in most instances if unrestricted, becomes a mechanic - most likely a poor one - the result is extremely annoying to those having at heart the welfare of their respective crafts. The Journeymen tend to increase in a geometric ratio which is too rapid a production of mechanics under ordinary circumstances for the need of the trade. Unemployment, low wages and an oppressed trade class are the logical and pernicious results of such a system. In many of the skilled trades this is a stock

8 Report of Industrial Commission, Vol. VII, p. 270-71.

argument against the unlimited use of helpers. In fact scarcely an article can be found in any labor journal treating this subject but what the warning is given that the employment of helpers unrestricted by the unions will inevitably produce an overflow of workmen and thus enable the employers to enforce all sorts of odious rules.

As can be readily seen, these two evils growing out of the presence of a helper class coordinate with and strengthen each other. Trade disintegration produces a demand for more helpers and provides a way for them to become journeymen, thus producing an oversupply. Likewise, an over supply of journeymen, especially an over supply of unskilled ones, aids materially the employers in any effort to grade the work and workmen of a trade into several branches, perhaps largely independent of each other. Formerly to be a boiler maker, a blacksmith or a machinist meant a very specific thing; but now owing to the combined workings of the above mentioned forces, to be classed as a member of any one of these trades may mean that a workman is engaged at a single one of the many occupations into which each of these trades is now divided. For instance, almost a page in the Constitution of the Boiler Makers is taken for an enumeration of the work falling within the jurisdiction of the Boiler Makers,⁹ yet it is a significant fact that a mechanic of this trade usually devotes his time to one or at least to a very few of these enumerated duties. But if ordinarily there were no tendency on the part of the employers either to promote regularly and systematically the helpers in their shops, or to have them take work claimed by mechanics, their very presence in extraordinary times is a menace to the welfare of the journeymen. Both in times of slack trade,

⁹ Subordinate Lodge Constitution, 1913, Art. 111. Sec. 3.

and of trouble with employers the substitution of helpers for mechanics is a standard grievance. "When the times get slack" said the President of the United Plumbers, "they (the employers) are laying off the journeymen and keeping the boys."¹⁰ Instances of the helpers taking the place of journeymen when strikes are on are numerous. Thus for example, when local union number 24 of the International Association of Marble Workers went out on strike in 1907, their places were taken by the helpers¹¹, even though these helpers were members of the International Association. The desire of helpers to do advanced work when an opportunity presented itself is hard to overcome, and this makes it difficult for the mechanics to obtain their demands, however just they may be.

There are two general policies which have been followed by the organized journeymen in their endeavor either to investigate or to completely eradicate the evils previously discussed. These are (1) the restriction of the helper and (2) the abolition of the helper.

1. RESTRICTION OF THE HELPER. Various kinds and degrees of regulations designed to restrict the helper and thereby to lessen the evil effects of his existence have been tried either by different unions or by a single union at different times, but for our purpose restrictive policies may be said to be of two general kinds: (a) an absolute restrictive policy and (b) a modified restrictive policy. By the former is meant the circumscribing of the work of the helper

10 Report of Industrial Commission Vol. VII, p. 270-71.

11 The Marble Workers Journal April, 1907.

within certain bounds beyond which he is never to go under any circumstances. By the latter is meant a policy of allowing helpers to be advanced in their work according to certain clearly defined rules or regulations. These two policies will now be taken up in order.

(a) In many of the older trades where for generations there were well established apprenticeship systems, and where apprentice regulations attained such sanctity in the eyes of journeymen, that to violate them was an act of odium, the policy of absolute restriction characterized the first efforts of unions in their endeavors to check the encroachment of the helpers. The main idea seemed to be to preserve all the apprentice rules in their pristine purity. If helpers were to be allowed at all, it had to be done on the grounds that they remain continuously as helpers at a work known as helpers' work. This policy has been tried for longer or shorter periods by each of the following National or International Associations; Blacksmiths, Boiler Makers, Iron Molders, Machinists, Marble Workers and Plumbers. The following are typical examples of rules restricting the work of the helper. It was decided in 1876 by the Iron Molders Union that, "any member can employ a person for the following purposes 'to Skin', 'shake out' and 'cut'. The helper was to be strictly confined to this work and not to be promoted at all. A former rule of the Boiler Makers was that "helpers be left strictly at helpers work".¹³

13. Proceedings 1901, p. 226.

Realizing the difficulty of confining an employee to a certain low grade work, especially when it is to the interest of the employer to advance him, the unions have as a rule made it a point to strengthen the restrictions as to work by hedging them about with other regulations. A few unions have done this by limiting the helper in the use of tools, the presumption being that the easiest way to perform the work which he is forbidden to do. For example, in an agreement of sheet metal workers, local union number 143, of New York City, with their employers, it is stipulated, "That each employer be allowed one helper when necessary, said helper not to be considered an apprentice and must not handle tools."¹⁴ It is obvious that this restriction as to tools is merely to strengthen and enforce the rule that helpers are not to be apprentices, that is, not to be learners of the trade in any sense of the word.

Since it is quite clear that it would be difficult to control the work of the helpers, if their number be excessive in proportion to the amount of work allotted for them to do, it has been customary for unions pursuing the absolute restrictive policy to limit the number of helpers allowed in a shop or on a job. For instance, when the iron molders first began their great war against the use of "Berkshires" in the molding industry, they did not deny the necessity for helpers, but opposed their employment by the molders, and especially the employment of an unlimited number.¹⁵ For by so doing the limitations as to what work a helper should do were sure to be violated.

14 Annual Report New York Bureau of Labor, 1908, p. 263.

15 Hately, Apprenticeship in American Trade Unions, p. 24.

In three of the skilled handicrafts, elevator construction, electrical work and steamfitting, the unions have never attempted the rigid circumscribing of the duties of the helper, as has just been described. This is doubtless due to two facts: (1) these being comparatively new trades, no halo has been thrown around an established apprentice system, (2) if helpers be allowed at all in these trades the nature of the work is such that it is absolute impossible to make an exact division of the work between a journeyman and his helper. For in none of these trades can a mechanic know prior to the time when the work is being done just what it may be necessary for him to call upon his helper to do. In other words, to revert to a statement in a former chapter, the need for helpers is not due to a subdivisions of labor, ^{but} to a physical necessity, and his work must depend upon the exigencies of the case and the discretion of the journeyman.

This policy of completely hedging the helper about and cutting off every avenue for promotion has not proven a success for two reasons, (1) Its fruitfulness in filling non-union ranks, and (2) difficulties of enforcement. The first of these will now be considered, but the latter will be taken up in another chapter on the execution of union policies.

Intelligent ^{helpers} / who work in intimate contact with mechanics will, to some degree, learn the arts of the craft however difficult the work may be. If such helpers are not given some hope of future betterment by the organized mechanics they become indifferent, if not actually hostile to union interests and eagerly drifts into non-union ranks as opportunity offer themselves. Then in times of general activity or trouble with employers, these non-union men which are recruited

from the helpers are a force to be reckoned with in maintaining the closed shop and ⁱⁿ enforcing union principles in general. In short, non-recognition of the rights of the helper to advance, to use an old figure, is like shunning Charbydis, only to be dashed to pieces on the rocks of Scylla. In dealing with this crowd of non-union workmen two courses lie open to the union, these are rejection or acceptance of these helper-trained mechanics, as journeymen of the union. Suppose for instance, in some city or town where a certain trade is not well organized, or in some new establishment not yet unionized, there are employed a large percentage of workmen who have never served as apprentices, and have picked up their knowledge of trade while serving as helpers in other localities or in other shops. Later, a union representative visits this city, or this shop where unionism is weak, or perhaps is entirely absent, for the purpose of organizing or reorganizing, the workmen of his craft. He finds a large percentage of ~~his~~ helpers who are there because in union localities and shops they were forbidden any promotion. Now the easiest and perhaps the only way for him to succeed in his undertaking is to admit to the organization all whom he finds working as mechanics and trust that the employers will later dispose of those not capable of commanding required minimum wages. If this is done, ^{/it is} an open violation of helper regulations, but on the other hand, if these helper-made journeymen are not organized and are firmly and persistently forbidden union privileges, they form as has been seen, a reserve force behind which the employers are able to dictate terms of agreement. For years it was the complaint of the molders

that they were reduced to a state of servitude, because of the presence of "bucks", who were ready to take the places of the mechanics at any time.¹⁶

The baneful effects following this policy of eradicating helper evils is indicated in the report of organizer Burke to the Plumbers' Convention in 1908, previous to which time United Brotherhood of Plumbers had been making strenuous efforts to hold the helpers in check. Mr. Burke said that of about four thousand men in Philadelphia engaged in the plumbing and in the pipe fitting industry that only about twenty-five percent were capable of qualifying for union entrance. Many of them, especially those of shipyards and locomotive works, were mere handy-men, specialist who could do only one class of work. Many others worked only on hydrants and did street work. These men possessed no mechanical ability.¹⁷ In a similar report the same year, he ascribed like conditions in Harrisburg and other places to the helper system.¹⁸

The failure of such a rigid policy has led the unions representing the more skilled trades, with one or two exceptions,¹⁹ to adopt more liberal policies towards the helper and thus control him by a process of conciliation, a policy to be sure not entered upon as a rule through any benevolent motives, but in order to better control the helper and advance the interests of the mechanics.

Under certain conditions the Blacksmiths, Boiler Makers, Electrical Workers, Elevator Constructors, Glass Workers, Machinists, Potters, Printers,

16 See Iron Molders Journal, Jan. 1877.

17 Ibid., October, 1873.

18 Plumbers, Gas and Steamfitters Journal, June, 1908.

19 Ibid. Dec. 1908.

19 Plumbers and Molders.

Pressmen, Plumbers, Teamfitters and Tile Layers have at some time, either temporarily or continuously, made provisions whereby a helper might be advanced to the position of a mechanic. In many instances this has merely amounted to unions bringing their policies in closer conformity to what has, in fact, already been going on. That many unions have accepted a system which has forced itself upon them can be shown by considering some facts underlying the adoption of a policy of helper promotion by the Blacksmiths' International Union, which is fairly typical of the facts in the other unions.

In 1903, a circular sent out from the general office of the Blacksmiths' Union referred to the fact that helpers in machine shops readily become smiths and that there are daily complaints that helpers are put on fires at lower rates than paid smiths for their work.²⁰ A year later Mr. O'Connell, in rendering a decision in a jurisdictional dispute between the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and the Allied Mechanics said: "My knowledge of the blacksmith's trade leads me to believe that the blacksmith's helper is the blacksmith's apprentice, for as a general rule there are no apprentices in the Blacksmith's trade except the helper who is looking forward at all times to the day when he will stand behind the anvil as a blacksmith."²¹ By referring to the Blacksmiths' Constitution at this time, it is seen that no provision was made whereby a helper could become a smith. On the contrary, the constitution of 1903, without any modification that: "No helper shall take a fire."²² However, in 1904, there was added to the elaborate apprenticeship regulations of the previous year the following clause: "Local unions shall do all in their

²⁰ Proceedings, 1903, p. 15

²¹ Proceedings, 1904, p. 15

²² Art. VIII, Sec. 7.

order to abolish the apprentice system and helpers shall be advanced according to merit.⁴³ The utter failure in the restriction of the helper from any advancement led to the complete abandonment of the previously enforced apprentice system and the legalization of the previously illegal method of learning to be a blacksmith. With the exception of the reinsertion of an apprentice clause in order to satisfy Southern lodges where helpers are largely negroes, the International Union of Blacksmiths has continued to foster the helper as a learner.

After a union has once recognized the helper as a legal learner of a trade, the next thing in order is to work out a definite scheme by which the evils of the system will be minimized as much as possible. Two general plans have been followed in formulating a policy for the promotion of helpers. One is to make a helper system supplemental to the regular apprentice system in vogue in a particular trade; the other is to form a helper system of promotion as nearly as possible in apprenticeship moulds and substitute it for the customary apprentice system.

At the present time the Boiler Makers, Glass Workers, Machinists, Pottery, Printing Pressmen and Tile Layers are pursuing the scheme of making the helper system of work a preparatory school for apprentices, thus making the two systems supplemental. For example, The International Association of Boiler Makers requires that "fifty per cent of the apprentices shall be taken from the ranks of the helpers, local conditions to govern, providing such a helper be a member in good standing and has actually worked two years for the company in which

⁴³ Constitution, 1905, Art VIII, Sec. 3.

he is to serve as an apprentice. Oldest helpers in point of service must have preference.²⁴ The Machinists by a recent referendum vote decided that helpers were eligible to become apprentices. The International Union of Ceramic, Enameling and Acoustic Tile Layers and Helpers provide that "All helpers must serve at least four years as an I. U. helper before becoming an Improver,"²⁵ and that "All Improvers (sometimes called apprentices) shall come from the ranks of the Helpers' Locals affiliated with the I. U."²⁶ Likewise among the Glass Workers²⁷ and Printers,²⁸ and in certain branches of the pottery industry it is the policy to have all apprentices taken from the ranks of the helpers or assistants.²⁹

As a means of mitigating the evils incident to the use of helpers in those trades seeking to maintain apprentice regulations, this plan of having a part or all of the apprentices taken from the helpers, no doubt, possesses in the minds of those formulating and fostering the scheme, some distinct advantages over the policy of absolutely forbidding the promotion of a helper to work classed as journeyman work. In the first place it is thought that it tends to conciliate the helpers and thus prevent the spirit of hostility among them towards the journeymen, which is characteristic of the helper where they have no chance

24 Subordinate Lodge Constitution, Art. III, Sec. 2.

25 Constitution, 1913, Art. VIII, Sec. 5.

26 Constitution, 1913, Art. XVI, Sec. 7.

27 See Proceedings Malamated Window Glass Workers of America, 1906, p. 136.

Also see Bylaws of L. A. No. 300, Knights of Labor, 1895, Art. IV, Sections 20-21/

28 Constitution and By-laws, 1903, Art. III, Sec. 1.

29 See Large Scale Agreements between the United Potters Assn. and the Full Brotherhood of Operative Potters, 1911, p. 12.

While the unions speak of such promoted helpers as apprentices, they are really not apprentices but a type of the advanced helper who are recognized by the unions as being on the road to journeyman-ship.

for advancement provided the union mandates be carried out. It is presumed that if helpers are given some opportunity for advancement, however slight that opportunity may be, that it will have weight in keeping helpers from violating union wishes and regulations. By obeying such regulations a helper has hope that some day he will receive union assistance in his efforts to become a journeyman. On the other hand, if he violates the rules and regulation of the union he is thereby brought into union disfavor and is cut off from all aid from this source in his efforts both to become a journeyman and to better his condition in other ways.

Again, this policy hedges in and strengthens the regular apprenticeship system in that it provides for a longer period of training for those entering the ranks of the journeymen and also limits more narrowly the field from which apprentices, so-called may be drawn. Take for instance, the rule of the Tile Layers that helpers must serve four years in order to become improvers and that improvers must serve two years in order to be eligible for membership as a journeyman.³⁰ This makes the full period of learning the trade six years, which ought to make very efficient those mechanics who fulfill these requirements. If all improvers must be taken from helpers who have served four years, this limits very narrowly the source from which improvers can be drawn. Not only does it do this, but it secures the aid of the helper in preventing employers from getting improvers or apprentices from outside sources.

It has been the continuous policy of the Steam Fitters, the

30 Constitution, 1912, Art. XXI, Sec. 4.

Elevator Workers, the Potters, with respect to certain branches of the industry, and lately of the Blacksmiths to consider helpers as the learners of their trades, and to circumscribe their employment and promotion with limitations similar to the ordinary apprentice regulations, also usually with the additional restriction that a helper must stand an examination before a committee of journeymen before he shall be recognized as eligible for journeymanship. Thus, the International Association of Steam, Hot Water and Power Pipe Fitters and Helpers provides that "Each I. A. P. of Steam Fitters shall have a trade test or examining board to examine into the mechanical ability and moral character and physical conditions of all candidates seeking admission to membership as Steam Fitters, and I. A. P. of Steam Fitters shall accept an application unless the applicant can show that he has worked five years at the trade".³¹ Likewise, an electrical workers' helper must serve four years before he is allowed to take an examination for promotion.³² The Blacksmiths provide for neither definite time of service or an examination, but merely make provision that "helpers shall be advanced according to merit."³³

The essential thing to be noticed in the provisions of all the unions providing for the promotion of helpers without their serving an additional period as apprentices is that the whole matter is placed in the hands of and left to the discretion of the examining committee or to the organized journeymen. This is a departure from the customary

31 Constitution, 1908, Sec. 33.

32 Constitution, 1909, Art. VI, Sec. 4 (2).

33 Constitution of the Local Unions, 1912, Art. 14, Sec. 4.

mode of dealing with apprentices who are usually not required to undergo the ordeal of an examination. Now the question very naturally arises. Why this distinction? Why do unions which recognize the helper as the legitimate learners of their respective trades demand that the helper be required to take an examination to test their fitness for journey-manship; while those unions which recognize apprentices only as the learners of a trade make no such requirements? Also, it may be aptly asked why does the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths provide that apprentices shall become smiths when said apprentices have served four years³⁴; but at the same time very indefinitely provide that "Helpers shall be advanced according to merit?" Again, why is it that the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters Helpers provide that plumbers apprentices shall serve an apprenticeship for five years³⁵, but that Steam or Sprinkler Fitters' Helpers must pass a satisfactory examination before they can become eligible to membership³⁶? It cannot be because journeymen are in a better position to know the efficiency of the apprentice better than they do that of the helpers; for if anything, helpers work in closer contact with journeymen than do apprentices; It is not that the unions which make learners out of their helpers do not keep in close touch with them and consequently know nothing of their time served as helpers, because all such unions

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Constitution 1910, Sec. 117.

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Constitution 1910, Sec. 138.

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register their helpers and keep complete "tab" on them by methods similar to those other unions in keeping track of their apprentices. The extent to which this is sometimes done is shown by the following rule of the International Association of Steam Fitters: "Helpers must be affiliated three years with the local they were initiated into before they are entitled to transfer to another local of helpers."³⁷

It appears that there are two possible explanations of this difference with respect to the promotion of helpers and apprentices. One of these is that among helpers there are often many mature men who have never learned any trade, which fact strongly indicates that they are likely never to be desirable candidates for membership as mechanics. Such being the case, an examination is the most practical way of separating the efficient and the desirable candidates from those not wanted. With the apprentice it is different. Since as a rule only a few apprentices are taken in a shop and they are taken in primarily to learn the trade. It is possible and desirable to use much discretion in their selection. If capable and earnest boys are selected, it is more than likely that at the end of a specified apprenticeship period that they will be fit in every way for entrance to journeymanhip.

The other reason for this distinction and perhaps the more plausible one from an "outsider's" point of view is, that there is more danger of over crowding a trade through a helper than through an apprentice system of preparation. Therefore, extra precautions

37 Constitution 1906, Sec. 33 (?)

are necessary in order to prevent such an overflow of workmen. That the examination of helpers desiring to become union mechanics is designed to limit the number entering the trade rather than primarily to test the skill of the candidate, is indicated in that numerous complaints are made by contractors to this effect. The dissatisfaction of the employers with the union examining board frequently terminates in a decided stand against accepting the union decisions as to whom is prepared to do mechanics work. Thus, the Master Steam Fitters of St. Louis, made the following rule: "Any fitter having been turned down by the examining board of the union, shall be examined by a committee of the M. P. F. A., and if found competent, shall be permitted to work in any shop that will employ him". That the Steam Fitters' Board had been turning down capable mechanics seems quite probable for the master steam fitters would hardly want to employ inefficient men and pay them the standard rate of wages.

Why this likelihood of too many mechanics if helpers be promoted? If one is primarily engaged to learn a trade and incidentally assists some journeymen, it may be easy to dispense with such assistance and limit the number of apprentices to conform to the needs of the trade for mechanics. But where men are primarily employed to assist journeymen and incidentally learn the trade, such limitations as to number are not at all practicable. The Steam Fitters, for instance, would

38 Report of the Industrial Commission, Vol. VII, p. 113
The following from the 11th Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor, p. 375, confirms the assumption that the object of examining helpers is partly, if not primarily, to keep down the number of mechanics breaking of Steamfitters, the report says: "The contractors complain very much that there are not enough union workmen for the work that should be done in the busy season. They claim that the unions intentionally keep its membership low and that the means of doing this is by making the conditions of the examination such that new men cannot pass it."

like to diminish the number of helpers in proportion to the number of journeymen on a job, but since they recognize that each fitter needs a helper, they simply seek to conform to the following rule:
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 "A journeyman steam fitter shall be entitled to one helper only"

Now here lies the peculiar evil in a helper system of promotion to a trade as contrasted with an apprenticeship system. If it be acknowledged that a helper is an essential factor in the performance of the duties of one mechanic, it may be argued, in most instances, that each and every mechanic be supplied with a helper. It might also be reasonably argued that if one helper at the end of a certain time of service as a helper shows efficiency and is advanced to journeymanship, that all helpers fulfilling the same requirements should likewise be advanced. Here arises a difficulty. If all journeymen have helpers and all helpers in a certain time become journeymen, what will be the results?

An editorial in the Official Journal of the plumbers for Feb. 1904, argues as follows along this line: "Taking up the rule that every plumber should have one helper, and that the helper should serve four years, let us see what the result would be in about eight years. Figuring that there are about 200 plumbers in a city, each one with a helper, in four years there would be 200 more plumbers. There would be 400 plumbers in a city that hasn't use for over 215 or 220. In another four years there would be 600 plumbers in a city that has no use for more than 250 or perhaps 300." The writer has made no allowance for the death of plumbers nor for the helpers who drop by the wayside.



yet it does seem that such a system would produce plumbers far in excess of the increase in population and in the demand for plumbers in a city of average growth. This wholesale method of supplying a trade, it is argued, according to the immutable law of supply and demand, brings low wages which in turn produces innumerable evils.

This same danger is voiced by a writer in the 'Steam Fitters' Journal' who said; "Generally speaking, the helper of today is the steamfitter of tomorrow, and I would suggest that steps be taken as soon as practicable whereby a method will be adopted providing for a system of apprenticeship-- If something is not done to regulate the number of young men desiring to learn our trade, eventually there will be a large surplus on the market."¹⁰

Inability to hold the helper within certain prescribed limits or to formulate a scheme for his promotion whereby the evils incident to the existence of a helper class can be overcome, has led a few national unions representing trades where a helper system of work has been widely and somewhat uniformly established to dispute the right and justice of a system and to clamor for its abolition. The policy of the plumbers in trying to get rid of all helpers, and that of the molders in endeavoring to do away with the "Berkshire System" afford interesting fields for the study of the helper. In order to develop certain theories as to why the helper is a matter of more concern in some trades than in others, and therefore to explain the stringent action of some unions with reference to this class of workmen,

40 Proceedings, 1908, p. 77.

attention will be given to the policies of each of the above unions, and the conditions leading to the formulation of the same.

In 1903, a writer in the plumbers official journal⁴¹ took this ground that helpers are not needed in the plumbers trade, and that consequently they should be abolished. No doubt others had taken this position before, but this being an opportune time, expressions of similar opinions soon voiced a general feeling of dissatisfaction. As a result, the Plumbers in their Convention⁴² of the same year were almost a unit against the system which was then in vogue. The fight against the use of any helpers was waged on two grounds, viz: (1) the helper is not needed, and (2) the proper regulation of the system is impossible.

It was argued that plumbers seldom need assistance and that when such⁴³ necessary it is better and more economical to have two plumbers work together than it is to use one journeyman and a helper. It was also claimed that this use of a helper tended to foster a spirit of laziness in the journeymen, which was detrimental to the trade. It is quite evident that this argument, as set forth by plumbers, had little to do with their opposition to the employment of helpers. In the first place, nothing was heard about helpers not being needed until the plumbers decided that they were a menace to the welfare of the journeymen, and in the second place, it is contrary to human nature for a workman to desire to get rid of an assistant on no other grounds than that he is not needed.

⁴¹ Feb. 1903.

⁴² Proceedings, 1903, p. 77.

The real cause for the plumbers wishing to abolish all helpers lies in the fact that the nature of the trade is such that it is practically impossible to use helpers and regulate their work and advancement satisfactorily. In other words, the general tendency of the use of helpers to produce an overflow of workmen and cause trade disintegration reaches the high water mark in the plumbing industry. Let us see if we can determine just why helpers in the plumbing business are, especially detrimental to the welfare of the organized journeymen, and why it is not possible to regulate and control them, as is done in some other trades. This perhaps can be done by contrasting the significance of the use of helpers in two very similar trades, plumbing and steam fitting.

In the first place, plumbing is predominantly an industry of small shops. There are of course large jobs of plumbing demanding contractors of considerable capital and responsibility, but a large part of the plumbing of a city consists of small jobs, such as putting in a single closet, sink, or bath-tub. These small jobs together with a large amount of repair work affords a means of livelihood for the master plumber having little capital, and a field of work for the low grade mechanic. But what bearing have these small shops on the helper question? First, as has been argued if each plumber has a helper and if each helper becomes a journeyman, the trade will be over crowded and unemployment will result. This unemployment will lead to the establishment of more small shops, for it is no great undertaking for a plumber having a kit of tools to open

a small establishment of his own. Again, if the helpers are prevented by union rules from legally entering the trade as union members, they drift into the small non-union shops or contribute to the establishment of more of like size. In either case, the helpers find their way into the trade and greatly increase the number of journeymen in proportion to the amount of plumbing. The existence of these low grade shops which are nourished and increased in great numbers by the use of helpers renders organization difficult, decreases the stability of bodies already organized, and makes collective bargaining uncertain. In short, it results in a general trade depression.

In steam fitting there is not the same likelihood that so many small shops will be established, as in the case in plumbing. Steam fitting usually means the installation of large plants, which work is done as a unit. Consequently, the contractor must possess some capital and be a man of considerable responsibility. The absence of conditions favorable to the establishment of shops of little caliber places the Steam Fitters in good position to control their trade. If helpers become dissatisfied with the treatment accorded them by the journeymen, they have few small non-union shops into which they can go nor can they, to any great extent, with profit set up as masters themselves. 43

43 The Baltimore business agent of the International Association of Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters' Helpers states that in Baltimore there are about 300 shops fifteen of which are union. Also that about ten steam fitting establishments, all unions, do practically all the steam fitting in the city.

Again, plumbing is a trade which is more liable to disintegration and to a grading of the workmen than is the case in steam fitting. Even if there were not so many small contractors in the plumbing business, the helper is a dangerous factor from the standpoint of the journeymen plumbers. When calls come for low grade construction and repair work, it is more than likely that a helper (provided one man can do the work) will be sent to do it. The result is that often the helper and helper-trained workmen have employment when the higher grade mechanics are idle. In steamfitting, inasmuch as the work is of a more uniform character and is done on the average for a higher class of people, there is not this same tendency to grade workmen and to send the poorer instead of the skilled men to do a job of work.

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Obviously, a union which is opposed to the promotion of the helpers proper is opposed to the employment of advanced helpers. ^{exactly} Obviously a union which provides for the promotion of helpers proper to an intermediary position, as previously explained, provides for the employment of advanced helpers. Union policies with reference to the employment and promotion of this type of advanced helper have been sufficiently discussed in connection with the consideration of the helper proper.

Organized journeymen have in a number of trades recognized, though reluctantly the employment of advanced helpers whom they do

44 For years the Iron Workers sought to abolish all helpers proper "helpers". But a discussion of their policies of abolishing "bols" will be taken up along with their policy concerning the payment of the helper, for the two policies are indissolubly connected.

not recognize as journeymen in embryo. This policy has been adopted in order to avoid competition with such unskilled men as non-unionists, and to provide for unionizing them without giving them recognition as full mechanics. This is the type of advanced helper who works at certain jobs within a trade often independently of the supervision of journeymen. The handyman, as this type of workman is usually called, is especially likely to be employed and also likely to be undesirable to the unions in those trades which are capable of a minute subdivision of labor. In the machinist and boiler makers trades the handyman has been in particular a troublesome factor, while in the plumber trade the helper is regarded as a menace to the union welfare because his employment is conducive to a trade overcrowded with mechanics and to the establishment of inferior shops. In the machinists and boiler makers' trades, on the other hand, the union looks with hostilities on the employment of handyman, because it is his employment, as the trade becomes more specialized, eats up, so to speak, the work claimed as belonging to those mechanics who have served an apprenticeship and are presumed to be efficient in all branches of their respective trades.

THE HIRING AND PAYING OF HELPERS.

Who shall hire and pay the helpers and how shall their rate of pay be determined, are questions which have been of considerable concern in a few industries where the journeymen are paid by the piece, by the weight or by the "turn". As the nature of the work

of the helper, his relation to the journeymen and the need for his services vary so widely in the different trades where piece work prevails, in order to develop the more significant points at issue, a concrete study will be made of the hiring and the paying of helpers proper in a few unions wherein the piece system and the employment and payment of helpers have been inter-related problems.

At the time of the organization of the Iron Molders International Unions of North America, the jurisdiction of the journeyman moulders extended to all the work of a shop. It included the skilled work of preparing and finishing the molds and also the unskilled work, such as attending the crane, carrying flasks, tempering sand, skimming the molten iron, and taking out castings. However, each molder did not attend to these varied duties himself. What was known as the "BerkshiresSystem" prevailed in most shops. Each molder forced, as it appears in some instances by the employer, engaged one or more "bucks" or berkshires, to assist him and paid them from his own earnings.

Before the organization of the International Molders Union there was much opposition by the various local unions to the "Berkshire System". Thus in the initial constitution of the Journeymen Stove and Hardware Molders Union of Philadelphia, organized in 1855, there is found the following, with regard to helpers: "No member of this union shall take a boy to learn the trade (unless it be his natural or adopted son), nor shall any journeyman working by the piece be allowed a helper for any other purpose than to make cores, skin and turn out castings, unless a majority of the members of this union in

which he may work, sign a paper in favor of giving him permission." ¹⁵

From the first, the International Union opposed this system. Its efforts were directed to the accomplishment of (1) the abolition of the prevailing system of employing and paying the helpers, (2) the abolition of all helpers proper and the establishment of a definite line between the work of the molders and the remote helpers. The attainment of the first of these desired ends was deemed necessary to the accomplishment of the second, which was the real issue at stake. ¹⁶ The early attitude of the Molders toward the employment of "Berkshires" is shown in the following quotations. A writer in the Iron Molders Journal of 1873, says: "We desire to say here now that it is against the spirit and the interest of the law, is against justice and common sense, is in fact, unconstitutional, for any member of the Iron Molders International Union to employ a helper and pay him out of his earnings. No helper can be employed unless paid by the proprietor of the shop and

¹⁵ Quoted in International Molders Journal, Nov. 1911, p. 327.

¹⁶ A writer in the Iron Molders Journal of Oct. 1873, in an article "Helpers vs "Fucks" says: "In large foundries where all work is made by the day there is almost as many helpers as molders, but they are legitimate helpers; they attend the crane, carry flasks, temper sand and take out castings; and against this class of helpers we have not a word to say. The work they perform is the work of a laborer, and molding is and remains to them a sealed book."

no piece molder can run a helper, whether employed by himself or his employer." ⁴⁷ In the Constitution of 1870, this regulation is found: "No member working by the piece can employ a helper and pay him out of his wages." ⁴⁸ This same constitution contains the following; "An employer demanding of molders that they shall work bucks shall constitute a lock out if endorsed in accordance with law". ⁴⁹ The attitude of the Molders Union toward the employment of bucks, as expressed in the above quotations, has never changed. However, less is heard about the opposition now than formerly, because the system has been, for most part, abandoned.

What are the Molders objections to this system which is so distasteful to them? When this question was asked Secretary Kleiber of the International Union, he replied: in substance: such a system brings out all the selfishness, all the niggardliness in the molders and they sacrifice the interests of the craft to the gratification of their own personal interests. A further study of the system will explain just what Secretary Kleiber meant. In the first place, the payment of the helper by the molder tends to lessen the amount of work to be done by the skilled molder, and to overcrowd the trade more than is the case where the helper is paid by the firm, and all work is done by the day instead of by the piece. In other words, the evils of a helper system, as has previously been discussed, become much accentuated when the mechanic assumes the role of an employer.

A molder agrees with his employer to work at so much a piece and pay his own help or helpers. The greater the amount of

⁴⁷ Official Journal, Oct. 1870, p. 133.

⁴⁸ Constitution, 1870, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 35.

relatively unskilled work the molder has done by helpers, the more time he has to give to the highly skilled work and consequently the ~~his profits become~~. *The system of this* greater, encouraging molders to give over a large part of their work to helpers is injurious to the craft as a whole for the supply of molders, granting that helpers do not become journeymen, remains the same while the amount of work to be done by them is decreased. This brings about a decline in wages, and thus the policy pursued by the individual molders in order to increase their earnings finally re-ounds to their detriment.

Again by allowing the helpers to encroach upon and to assist in doing the more skilled parts of molding they learn the trade, then if prices paid them by the molders are not to their liking they launch forth as molders themselves and thus in a second way contribute to the increase of the supply of mechanics beyond the demand for them. All this is conducive to a weakening of union unity and strength. In short, a journeyman by becoming an employer does things which are entirely derogatory to union principles. They reduce to a low limit the wages of helpers, encourage, them to do skilled work and thus to become mechanics, all of which works to the advantage of the capitalist at the expense of the molders.

The union view as we have thus tried to give it is summed up as follows in an Article "Helpers vs Bucks", a Quotation from which reads, "The system now in force in Buffalo was almost the universal system in 1855-59, from one to five bucks for every journeyman. Wages were being rapidly reduced. Every reduction was followed by the journeyman hiring another buck. Molders were made about five times

as fast as the necessities of the case demanded. Molders became so numerous that all sorts of odious rules could be enforced." ⁵⁰

The opposition to the payment of the helpers by the journeyman and the opposition to the practice of allowing them to be under the direct control of the molders at all times, i. e., opposition to use of the helpers proper have been so associated that it is impossible to consider one as a problem distinct from the other. Suffice to say, it has been found impractical to attempt to limit the work of the helper and yet allow the molder to employ and pay him, for as long as a journeyman has an assistant and by himself, he will exploit the helper to the fullest extent possible. On the other hand, it is unsatisfactory to have an employer pay a helper and place him under the direct supervision of a journeyman who is working by the piece, for here again it would apparently work to the advantage of the mechanic to have the helper do as much work as possible, thus bringing about the evils as heretofore described. By way of summary, it may be said that it has been the continuous policy of the Molders to draw a distinct line between the work of the journeymen and that of the helpers and to have the latter paid by the employers.

When iron making was first introduced into this country, it was recognized that the boiler or puddler and the roller in the hot iron department had full charge of the entire work of turning out the product. They hired the helpers necessary and paid them. This practice was so universal that when the iron workers first organized this system of hiring and paying the helper was accepted without question. With the introduction of the manufacture of sheet iron

practically the same plan of employing helpers was adopted. Thus a sub-system of employment prevailed throughout the industry.

The problems rising in connection with such a contract system of work are quite different in the manufacture of iron and steel from what they are in iron molding. This can easily be seen from the following considerations: (1) the employment and payment of helpers by journeymen in the manufacture of iron and steel does not lead to an increased number of helpers as it does in the case of molding. A boiler or puddler for instance, will turn out a certain product each day and can use to advantage a certain number of helpers, but to increase this number would not increase his output and therefore be a financial loss to him; (2) the number of molders employed in a shop is more subject to an increase than is the case in an iron or a steel mill. If helpers become efficient molders it is an easy matter for the employers to find places for them in their shops as journeymen but if helpers in the manufacture of iron and steel become capable of taking charge of furnaces or of rolls, journeymen's positions cannot so easily be provided for them. The output of a mill is so much and cannot be increased by the simple addition of more workmen; (3) the number of molding establishments is much greater than is the number of iron and steel mills; consequently, in the former there are greater opportunities than in the latter for a helper in one shop to obtain employment as a journeyman in another, and (4) helpers in the manufacture of iron and steel are for most part employed because it is physically impossible for journeymen to prosecute their work without assistance. On the other hand, helpers are employed in a foundry, except in case of large machinery, because of a sub-division of labor

and could be dispensed with.

Since the nature of the iron and steel industry makes necessary a certain number of helpers, and at the same time makes it difficult for them to encroach upon the work of the journeymen, it is quite natural that the helpers should be considered as the rightful learners of the trade and no apprentice system be established by the Union. Thus divorced from the encroachment of the helper upon the work of the journeymen and from an established apprentice system, the hiring and the paying of the helper can be studied as an independent problem.

The chief question of the Iron, Steel and Tin workers in connection with the employment and payment of helpers has not been who shall hire and pay them, but how much shall they be paid and how secure uniformity in the wages of helpers doing similar work. As early as 1870, one of the leading topics at the convention of the United Sons of Vulcan was what proportion of the wages received by a workman shall be passed on to his helpers. A petition submitted to this convention asked that helpers "Wages shall be uniform and that no more than one-third shall be paid one helper, nor more than one-half of what the furnace makes shall be paid two helpers."⁵³ The Committee on the good of the order spoke of this proposition "As a good one and one long

51 In the early days of the Union some restrictions were placed upon the promotion of helpers. Thus in 1881, the Association passed the following resolution, "That each putter helper must help one year and be six months a member of the Association before he be allowed the privilege of boiling a heat.

52 Vulcan Record, No. 2, 1870, p. 20.

desired - one that your committee would like very much to see in operation everywhere. But to make it uniform, though this National Forge would be impracticable. Wages of helpers have been and we presume will be controlled by circumstances as they exist in respective localities. If all were a unit upon the subject its successful imagination could be hoped for, but as certain localities have certain rules upon the subject we can barely expect much uniformity, - hence the impropriety of adopting any measure at present looking to that end. That a helper should receive more than one-third, no reasonable person would assert, for when we consider that the helper is, as it were, an apprentice learning the business, one-third, is ample, and by a strict adherence to this policy the helper himself would desire the full advantage of his trade, when completed to take charge of a furnace. But your committee would submit the subject to the consideration of the various Subordinate Forges suggesting that they adopt such regulations relative thereto, as the circumstances will warrant"⁵³

This report which expressed so clearly all phases of the question was adopted, but since it set forth no specific action the same subject continued to be a prominent one at all conventions of the National Forge. The one-third and five percent rule was gradually adopted in the various Districts and finally became a regulation of the Amalgamated Association.⁵⁴ Gradually, rules have been adopted

⁵³ Ibid.
⁵⁴

for the uniform payment of helpers in all departments.

While the union, when first organized, accepted the customary mode of paying helpers, there has been a tendency on the part of the union to drift away from this method and to demand that all helpers be paid by the firms. There^{are} two assignable reasons for this. In the first place, it is extremely inconvenient and confusing to both helper and journeymen to have a sub-system of payment. In the second place, with such a system it is difficult to maintain a uniform wage rate for helpers doing the same class of work. Even though the union fix a rate for the payment of all helpers, such a scale is difficult to enforce. If the helpers be not members of the union, as was the case in the class of the United Sons of Vulcan, they felt bound in no way to abide by the union scale for their payment. Since the contractors or heads of the various teams are practically compelled to have help, in times of general activity when labor is scarce, the helpers are likely to force from their employers a higher rate than provided for in the union scale. There being many masters seeking to obtain help which is scarce, wages of helpers will inevitably rise. On the other hand, if times be dull and help plentiful, the journeymen contractors will be inclined to take advantage of their superior bargaining power, and pay helpers less than is provided for by the union. With helpers as members of the union, this violation of the union scale is reduced to the extent only that helpers refuse to break the laws of their organization. With so many employers, competition is most sure to produce variable and non-uniform wages for helpers. Especially is this true since evasion would be

difficult to detect because of the fact that only two persons, those interested have knowledge of each wage contract. By having the helper paid from the office such evasion is made more difficult. The rate of pay for all helpers is inserted in the wage scale and the only way of violating it would be by rebate paid to the head of a team or by additional wages paid the helper.

While the union favors the payment of all helpers from the office, it does not favor the hiring of the helpers by the firms. For years there has been a clause in the National Constitution which provides that "All men are to have the privilege of hiring their own helpers without dictation from the management."⁵⁵ Inasmuch as there is a close personal contact of each workman with his helpers, and since each workman is responsible for the work done by the team of which he is the head, the union deems it advisable to give every man the privilege of selecting his own assistants. This plan of allowing the men to choose their own helpers, whether so designed or not, gives the journeymen a strong leverage for drawing helpers into the union, and forcing them to accept the wage rate provided for helpers.

A striking example of almost non-opposition to the system of the journeymen hiring and paying his own helper, is found in the pottery industry. For example, the journeymen jiggerman pays his "Batterout" his mold-runner and his finisher.⁵⁶ This system almost universally prevails in the pottery and the journeymen potters have never seriously opposed it. However, in 1912, the Brotherhood of

⁵⁵ - Constitution, 1917, Art. XVII, Sec. 31. Also see Article Constitution

⁵⁶ The "Batterout" cuts the clay off the roll which comes from the mill. He bats it out upon a smooth surface and places it upon the molds. The mold-runner simply brings the molds to the batterout and takes them from the jiggerman to the "green room" and places them upon the boards. The finisher who puts up the pieces is not, strictly speaking, a helper to the jiggerman but

Operative Potters made the proposition to the Western Manufacturers Association that all contract labor in all branches of the trade should be abolished.⁷ While this proposition had reference to the entire system of piece work, one of the chief consequences, had it been accepted, would have been the transfer of all helpers from the employment of the potters to that of the firm.

To the journeymen potter, the most unsatisfactory phase of this system contract work is that a standard wage for helpers has not proven successful. The helpers refuse to join the union along with their employers and being without the union, they feel no compulsion whatever to accept a standard rate of pay which is determined by the union. The helpers are ever ready to higggle for higher wages. Consequently, the journeymen continuously break over and pay helpers more than is provided for in the wage scale.

The hiring of helpers by the potters has not proven so harmful to the journeymen employers, as did the employing of "bucks" by the iron holders. This has been due to the following: (1) pottery factories are so localized that they are well under union control (2) the nature of the work is such that there is an exact division of labor among the workmen, which fixes exactly the number of helpers to the employment.

57 Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor, p. 379.

CHAPTER III.

ORGANIZATION OF THE HELPER.

I.

Theories of organization.

Most of the early labor organizations in America were formed according to the theory that trade rather than industrial lines should determine the boundaries of a union. Following out this policy of having like workmen only in an organization, it was until recently the common practice in unionism for those craftsmen considered as masters of all the work of a trade to organize exclusive of the auxiliary workmen whose primary function is to advance the work of the skilled artisans.

This policy of the skilled workmen in excluding from their respective organizations their unskilled and semi-skilled co-workers was defended chiefly on the ground that in this way could the welfare of the trade be best subserved. Inasmuch as the interests of those engaged in a single trade but at different grades of work are not always identical and frequently conflicting, it was argued that an organization made up of both journeymen and helpers would be subject to frequent internal dissensions which would enable the employer to play one class of workmen against the other, to the detriment of the union. This argument is not without force. Internal dissension might arise over the passage of union rules and regulations, or over collective bargaining with the employers. For instance, in determining what wages shall be demanded for XXX union workmen, both mechanics and helpers, it is quite probable that there would not be a consensus of opinion of the two classes as to the disparity which should exist between the wages of

the mechanic and his helper. Also, when an agreement is being made with employers this difference of opinion as to the relative wages of the skilled and less skilled classes might be a source of contention which would cause union disruption. So much for the theory as to the impracticability of this scheme of organization, the correctness of which will be more fully and more concretely studied when we come to consider organizations not in keeping with the above theory.

In some trades the policy of the skilled craftsmen in allowing as little work as possible to be done by auxiliary workmen and in opposing any advancement on the part of such workmen may have had much influence in determining the policy of craftsmen in excluding helpers from their organization. Obviously, it is quite inconsistent for mechanics to oppose both the employment and promotion of helpers and at the same time admit them to an organization which is supposed to seek impartially the welfare of all its members. To illustrate, the preamble to the Constitution of the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gas Fitters, Steam Fitters and Steam Fitters' Helpers assert that "The aspirations of this Association are to construct an organization which will subserve the interests of all its members." In view of this statement and of the fact that the plumbers Union has been so strenuously opposed to the employment, and where employed, the promotion of helpers, it would be extremely incongruous for this same union to provide for the organization of the helpers in the trade. In an industry where it is possible for a helper to become a mechanic, the union to be consistent must either abandon any apprentice system it may have or

refuse helpers admission into their organization.

Craft pride, together with the belief that recognition of helpers as members would destroy their claims to a vested right in their respective trades was no doubt of considerable force in causing skilled artisans of many unions to refuse their less skilled associates admission into their orders. Evidence as to this can be found in the convention proceedings of most any union where there was an attempt to provide for the organization of auxiliary workmen. For instance, when the Machinists were contemplating a change in their constitution in order that handyman might be made eligible for membership, many objections, some of which were actuated wholly by craft pride, were made. For example, one delegate said: "If you are in favor of taking in the handyman you must remember that the general feeling in our organization is opposed to being put on an equal basis with the handyman. We ought to preserve our dignity." ¹ Another delegate said : "We do not want to lose sight of the fact that we belong to the International Association of Machinists, not of handyman. If we take these men in we will have to change our name to the International Association of Machinists and Handyman. I want to belong to an association of Machinists and none other." ²

At this point it is important to note the policy of the American Federation of Labor with respect to the organization of the helper.

1. Machinists Monthly Journal, July, 1903. P. 588.

2. Ibid. P. 587.

Secretary Morrison in answer to an inquiry as to what principles guides the Federation in deciding whether helpers shall have a national organization independent of the journeymens unions, replied: "It depends wholly on the judgment as to what relationship will be most advantageous to all concerned. As you are aware, the helper is closely related to the journeyman. One of the objects of the Federation is to bring the members of the various crafts and callings into the closest possible relationship for mutual co-operation. Before the system of specialization was developed to such a high degree as prevails in modern industry, the journeymen of the various trades were all-around mechanics, and there was a wide gulf between the labor of the journeymen and the labor of the helper. This placed them in distinct classes. The development of specialization has frittered the skill of a mechanic in the all-around sense; in other words, in the present system, a workman is trained in a certain branch of the trade and does not become skilled in all of its branches. This specialization requires a much shorter apprenticeship and the helper can be more readily fitted to take up the work and, hence, he is more nearly a competitor than was the case under the former conditions. This transition in the work has brought the journeymen and the helper into closer relationship and the action of the different National organizations in organizing their helpers under their jurisdiction is a result of this condition. An International organization in a trade is recognized by the A. F. of L. as having entire jurisdiction over that trade. The helper of a trade belongs to a trade, and consequently any claim of an International union to the helper in a trade over which it has

jurisdiction must have a prior recognition," ³ To the requests of the helpers for a separate national organization.

This lengthy quotation is given because the policy of the Federation, as stated here by Secretary Morrison, is of prime importance in a study of the organization of the helper. There is seen a striking contrast in the policy of most early national unions of artisans in refusing to organize in conjunction with helpers and the policy of the Federation in seeking to bring helpers and journeymen into a close relationship and if possible, into the same union. The significance of these two opposing policies will receive further consideration later. Suffice to say here, that they have been important factors in the development of the two main schemes. One of these is to organize them independently of the journeymen's organization. The other is to have them organized under the jurisdiction of the journeymen.

2

Helpers Organized Independently of the Journeymen.

Of the helper organizations which have no connection with the orders of the skilled artisans, there are four classes: (1) local unions entirely independent of any other body (2) independent National organizations; (3) local unions affiliated directly with the Federation of Labor; and (4) National organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

Before the widespread growth of the Knights of Labor in the late seventies and the creation of the American Federation in 1881, owing

3 Personal letter to the writer.

to the refusal of journeymen to receive helpers into their organizations such auxiliary workmen in most of the skilled trades, if organized at all, had no connection with any other order. Little data concerning the organization of the helper at this early period is extant, yet that which does exist shows that they at that time in certain trades were actually organizing themselves independently of the mechanics' organizations. As early as 1871, reference was made to blacksmiths' helpers' union, No. 1 of Albany, New York. It appears that this union had been in existence for some time prior to the above date and was desirous of corresponding with other helpers, organized and unorganized, with a view to calling a national convention in order to organize a national association.⁴ However, this plan seemed never to have crystalized and for the time being blacksmith's helpers, where organized, remained in independent local unions.

Another group of helpers who early had local unions were the assistants of the iron boilers or puddlers. In 1871, the puddlers helpers at New Albany thanked other helpers for support given them during a strike. The records show that they received financial assistance from other helpers to the amount of \$149.00.⁵ The fact that puddlers' helpers held meetings, called strikes and contributed benefits, strongly indicates that they had some kind of local organizations. Two years later, 1873, the puddlers' helpers in Chicago, went out on a strike against the wishes of the puddlers. From the report of the president of the United Sons of Vulcan, it is evident that these helpers had an organization of their own.⁶

4 Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal, July, 1871, p. 272.

5 Vulcan Record, Dec. 31, 1871, p. 18.

6 Proceedings, 1873, p. 11.

Though the American Federation of Labor discourages the formation of such local lodges, helpers down to the present time are continually organizing themselves into independent local unions.

Helpers previously organized under the jurisdiction of the Federation of Labor, because of some dissatisfaction with that body, frequently secede and become independent organizations. The tendency of helpers, especially of unskilled helpers or laborers, to secede from the Federation or to form an independent organization, seems much greater than is the case with skilled workmen. Secretary Morrison of the Federation attributes this to the foreign element which prevails among the helper class of workmen.⁷ As a rule, the foreigners engaged at this grade of work are of a spasmodic temperment and readily yield to the persuasive powers of ambitious persons who seek to obtain position of leadership by organizing unaffiliated unions or by having those secede which are affiliated. That the foreign element is largely responsible for independent local unions of helpers is indicated in the fact that many such local unions are composed exclusively of foreigners. For instance, the Polish laborers in Toledo, established an independent union. Likewise, the Polish and Italian laborers in Buffalo organized on national lines.⁸

In other cases, independent local organizations have come into existence because the helpers were not satisfied with the conditions under which they were to be transferred from the jurisdiction of the Federation of Labor to that of ^{the journeyman organizations of} their respective crafts. Thus in

7 - - - Personal letter to the writer. - - - - -

8 Hod Carriers and Building Laborers Official Journal, July, 1906, -p.13.

1911, when the National Association of Machinists provided for the organization of helpers under their jurisdiction, the Federation transferred her previously ~~exercised~~ exercised jurisdictional powers over machinists helpers to the International Association of Machinists. In many instances the helpers who had no hand in this transfer of allegiance and who were not entirely pleased with the status they were to have under the Machinists preferred, for a time at least, to exist as independent organizations.⁹ It is claimed that the lure of low dues has been of considerable influence in turning helpers to independent rather than to affiliated unions. Auxiliary workmen, especially remote helpers, being usually a shifting class do not see wherein they are benefited by a strong treasury. Especially do they fail to see where they get value in return for ^{what money they contribute for} the enrichment of the general treasury. Speaking of the independent Hod Carriers and Building Laborers of New York, the president of the International Union of Hod Carriers and Building Laborers said that these workmen could be persuaded to come into the International Union but for the extremely low dues they pay.¹⁰

Though the blacksmiths' helpers in 1871 and the puddlers' helpers in 1873, made some efforts to form National organizations, their plans never materialized and the only independent national helpers organizations that have come into existence have been the results of some dissatisfaction with the Federation. Just as in the case of independent local unions, and for the same reasons, helpers, especially the more unskilled ones, have a stronger inclination for independent unions than have skilled mechanics. According to a writer in the Official Journal

9 Interview with the president of the International Association.

10 Official Journal, 1907, p. 5.

of the International Hod Carriers and Building Laborers Union of America, "The first laborers' union organized in America as an international union was established in the State of Massachusetts some eighteen or twenty years ago."¹¹ Since that time a number of independent national unions of building laborers have been formed, prominent among which have been the International Laborers Union, with headquarters at Dayton, Ohio; and the International Building Laborers Protective Union of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Independent unions of laborers or helpers, whether local or national, have as a rule, not prospered. Their weakness is traceable to several causes. In the first place, helpers are for most part either boys of mature mediocre men, neither of whom possess executive ability sufficient to guide a union with any degree of success. Taking advantage of this lack of leaders among the laborers, demagogues having at heart their own welfare rather than that of the workmen, gain control of the unions and exploit them at their will. A notable example of this is the case of Critchlow, Secretary and General Treasurer of the International Laborers Union, who, if reports concerning him be true, was a veritable shark who preyed upon ignorant workmen in order to satisfy his own ambitions.¹²

The ephemeral character of independent unions of auxiliary workmen is much accentuated by the obstacles thrown in their way by the American Federation of Labor, which wages an unceasing warfare against the organization and existence of such unions. Whitney, who has made a

11 Ibid, Sept. 1906, p. 6.

12 See Official Journal International Hod Carriers and Building Laborers Union of America, July, 1906, pp. 7-8.

Careful study of the contests between the affiliated and the independent organizations says: "A great deal of time and attention has been expended during the past few years by the American Federation of Labor and the Building Trades Department in an effort to bring about an effective national union among the hod carriers and building laborers. Many dual local unions existed in various parts of the country, some of which had never been part of the national union, while others had seceded from it. The Federation used its influence to force all of these local unions to affiliate with the Hod Carriers and considerable progress has been made toward the accomplishment of its purpose."¹³

Since the organization of the American Federation of Labor local unions of helpers affiliated with this body have been numerous. The Federation has been especially active in organizing those workmen whose organization is not provided for by the national unions having jurisdiction over the trades in which such workmen are employed. Whenever there are indications that the helpers in a trade or in a group of allied trades can in a certain locality maintain a lodge, an organizer will seek to bring them together under a charter granted by the Federation. A local union thus chartered may subsequently be disposed of in one of the following ways: (1) it may be transferred to the jurisdiction of some existing union; (2) a number of such affiliated local unions may be combined in a national organization, chartered by the Federation; (3) it may remain directly affiliated with the Federation under the charter granted it.

13 Jurisdiction in American Building Trades, p. 76.

Whenever a national union of journeymen which has previously failed to take any action toward organizing the helpers of the trade represented by the union, changes its policy and seeks to bring under its jurisdiction those workmen hitherto excluded, it is the policy of the Federation to sever direct connection with such local unions, thus provided for,

The boiler makers' helpers in 1901, the blacksmiths' helpers in 1903, and the Machinists helpers in 1911, were thus transferred from the American Federation to the National unions of the above mentioned trades.

On the other hand, if there be a very clear line of cleavage between the work of the mechanic and his helper and very little probability that there will ever be, a gradual transition from the work of a helper to that of a journeyman, the Federation is not averse to organizing the helpers in a separate union. By thus separating the helpers from the artisans, workmen who are really helpers in a trade come to be regarded as workmen without the trade of those whom they assist. In fact, the granting of a national charter to an auxiliary class of workmen means that the Federation considers them not as helpers in a trade but as a class wholly independent of those whom they assist. At this juncture the Federation has to, or at least should, act with extreme caution for it is one of the principles of the Federation never to grant to one body powers which conflict with charters previously given to another union. In view of this, if a charter should be granted to a body of helpers whose work subsequently becomes an easy and a natural stepping stone to that of the mechanics whom they assist, trouble would be the inevitable result. There is continual strife between some trades because of jurisdictional disputes and certainly contentions of this

character between two unions whose members work hand to hand at all times, would be much greater than between two unions where there are fairly well defined trade lines. For instance, if the blacksmiths' helpers in 1903, had been organized, as some suggested, into a national union, chartered by the Federation of Labor, it is highly probable that there would be constant friction between the blacksmiths and helpers. Every introduction of a new piece of machinery or of a new process would be the occasion for a redistribution of work between the two national bodies.

The two national unions which have been chartered by the Federation for the purpose of unifying and solidifying helpers, are the International Hod Carriers and Building Laborers' Union of America and the International Brotherhood of Foundry Employees. The peculiar fact to be noted in connection with these organizations, especially the former, is that trade lines are not observed in their formation. Inasmuch as laborers change from one trade to another so rapidly, it is more satisfactory to group those in closely allied trades into one body. This avoids frequent changes in membership, which would be necessary were the laborers organized according to the trades in which they work, and thus makes the union more stable. As Secretary Morrison states it: "The helpers in the Building trades have organized close together because of their close relationship in the work and the advantage of this form of organization. If the laborers of the various crafts in the building industry were divided, you can readily realize that it would bring about the formation of several organizations instead of the present

concrete organization that now exists among them."¹⁴

An important point in this connection, whether purposely planned or not by the Federation, is the fact that by thus organizing building laborers in a general labor union, there is no danger of their coming into any serious controversies with a building trade union. Being a complex body of laborers from different trades, other matters rather than jurisdictional disputes engage their attention. Then, this form of organization gives a union jurisdiction over certain classes rather than over any specific part of a trade. The unions are thus left in undisputed possession of their respective trades. Whereas, if the helpers, especially the more skilled ones, in a trade were given a national charter, there would, of necessity, have to be a division in jurisdiction over a trade, between the journeymen and their helpers. As has been pointed out this would undoubtedly lead to endless jurisdictional disputes.

The policy of the journeymen in certain trades in not taking helpers under their jurisdiction nor into their organization and the policy of the Federation in not organizing into separate national unions those helpers who tend to encroach directly upon the work of the mechanics have left, in some instances for long periods, skilled helpers or semi-skilled mechanics from being organized as members of a national association of their own. Thus it came about that the unskilled building laborers and the foundry employes had the privileges of a national association, as early as 1904, while the helpers in the machine shops, up till 1911, were forced if organized in connection with the Federation, to content themselves as members of a local union

¹⁴ -- Personal letter to the writer. -- -- -- -- --

existing under a charter granted by the Federation.¹⁵

3

CHANGE IN POLICY OF ORGANIZATION.

As has been stated, most of the older unions of Artisans formerly gave no attention whatsoever to the organization of their helpers. In recent years, however, with one or two exceptions, unions which were originally composed of skilled craftsmen only, have changed their policy on this point and have in some way made provisions for the organization of auxiliary workmen in their respective trades.

In the first part of this chapter were set forth the chief forces which influenced those artisans who have opposed the helpers being organized in or under the jurisdiction of their unions. Since in recent times there has been almost a complete change of policy on this question, it now becomes desirable to know what forces have been active in bringing about the union of journeymen and their helpers. These forces may be summed up as follows: (1) Common interests of Mechanics and their assistants; (2) inability of journeymen to control the helpers and shops with the helpers in-organized or organized separately from the journeymen, (3) an extended sub-division of Labor. It can be readily seen that these forces do not act exclusive of each other. Thus, the common interests of the two classes growing out of association in work and approaching equality in skill have made it difficult for the journeymen to control the shops because the helpers, so to speak, have become

their competitors. Likewise, subdivision of labor has been the great factor in breaking down the barrier of skill between journeymen and helpers and has thus led to the common interests of the two classes.

The more liberal arguments advanced by artisans in favor of taking helpers into their organizations is that the common interests of the two classes of workmen demands unity in action. From the general principle that organization is necessary to secure the rights of the workmen, it can readily be argued that a union of all workmen within a trade is necessary in order that the strength of the trade organization may attain its maximum.

Common interests of helpers and journeymen grow out of both an intimate and dependent association in work and similar relations to the same employes. To illustrate, a potter who uses a jigger for making dishes employs three assistants, a "batter-out", a mold runner and a finisher. If a jiggerman lacks any or all of these assistants his work is greatly hampered. He must either perform all the duties connected with the work which falls within the jurisdiction of a jiggerman or combine with other jiggermen who are likewise short of helpers. In either case, his earnings are greatly reduced. In the latter case, skilled workmen, piece work privileges, are forced to do work which they had calculated to have done by helpers and consequently, they receive helpers wages for it. In the first case, the jiggermen not only labor under this disadvantage, but they also lose much time in changing from one occupation to another. On the other hand, if the jiggermen are kept from work in any way, their helpers are left unemployed.

this mutual dependence in work has, no doubt, in many trades, turned the balances in favor of an united organization.¹⁶ At least union leaders who have ~~been~~ favored taking helpers into journeymen's unions have strongly emphasized this point. For example, the president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, said " This being true, that is the less skilled workman must assist the more skilled workman to enable him to complete or finish the work at which both perform a proportionate amount of labor; therefore, I deem it advisable to admit all that are directly working at jobs necessary to keep a train of rolls running or a furnace working that furnishes iron for a train of rolls, otherwise there may and can be trouble expected almost at any time if that class of labor is not made eligible for membership."¹⁷

The second source of the common interests of journeymen and their assistants is their similar relation to a common employer. Mechanics and helpers have the same work hours, the same shop conditions, sanitary and otherwise, and a common employer upon whom demands must be made for any change in general working rules or for an increase in wages. Aroused by the industrial workers, the slogan of many trade unionists has become solidarity, at least to the extent of combining all the workmen of a

16 - - While the pottery industry furnishes an excellent example of the common interests of journeymen and helpers growing out of an intimate relation in work, it should be noted that the helpers have not as a rule availed themselves of the privileges of joining the Brotherhood of Potters. Their policy in staying out of the union is due to the fact that they are employed and paid by the journeymen.

17 Proceedings, 1887, p. 1953.

single trade into one body. On the principle that in union there is strength, many artisans have put in the background their former policy of skilled craftsmen only in an organization and have come to advocate the admission of helpers. Secretary Gilthorpe of the Boiler Makers speaking on this subject, said "As an example of organization throughout the world to consolidate and solidify, I would strongly urge the admission of holders on and helpers into this brotherhood."¹⁸

While many skilled mechanics having broad and unselfish views have argued in favor of the organization under a single charter of all workmen within a trade the chief reason why most journeymen have come to favor co-organization of mechanics and helpers lies in the fact that experience has taught them that it is difficult if not impossible for them to control the shops if their helpers, especially the more skilled ones, be unorganized or organized independently /^{of} their more skilled co-workers. When the plan of leaving helpers to look out for themselves has failed to bring about the desired results, the next move has been to try the opposite policy, that of organizing the helpers in some relation to the union of the craftsmen of the respective trades. That selfish rather than benevolent motives have actuated the journeymen in this change of policy is strongly indicated /^(a) from the expression of various union leaders on the subject, (b) the fact that helpers have not been admitted until after repeated attempts to control them in other ways have failed (c) the order in which the different classes of helpers have been admitted. (d) The restriction upon the privileges of helpers when admitted.

18 Official Journal, Aug. 1, 1900, p. 235.

One of the most universal arguments which has been used in persuading Artisans that they should admit helpers into their organizations is that such a plan will better enable the journeymen to control the helpers and thus eliminate the evils incident to their employment. A few very typical quotations will illustrate this point. The president of the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers said : "Judging the future by the past there is trouble in store for the association unless we legislate so as to have complete control of all men working in and around mills."¹⁹

In advocating this broader extension as to membership, the Secretary of the Boiler Makers declared that : "When this brotherhood has within its folds all who earn their living at the trade, wont we be better able to control all encroachments both numerically and financially by reason of our numbers and increased revenues."²⁰ More radical than these expressions on the subject are the words of a delegate who argued as follows in favor of the Machinists taking "Handymen" within their jurisdiction: "We are only trying to get the "handymen" under our control that we can put him out of business."²¹

The second ground for the assumption that ulterior motives have predominated in actuating journeymen in this change in policy is the fact that those unions making such a change have not done so until after vain efforts have been made in other ways to control the helpers. For instance, the blacksmiths, boiler makers and machinists tried in every conceivable manner to check the encroachment of the helpers, both in work and in number, before they reached the conclusion that it is a good policy to have the helpers connected with their respective organizations.

¹⁹ Proceedings, 1887, p. 1953.

²⁰ Boiler Makers Journal, Oct, 1900, pp 333-334

²¹ Machinist Monthly, Journal, July, 1903, p. 587.

Further proof that the predominant motive moving the artisan to a change in the policy of helper organization has been the result of a desire to benefit the artisan himself rather than the helper is the fact in those trades where there are different grades of helpers, those who had been giving the journeymen most trouble were admitted first. For example, the "handymen" or advanced helpers were taken over by the Machinist in 1903,²² but not until 1911,²³ were the helpers proper made eligible for membership, while the general helpers are still unorganized. Likewise, the Iron Steel and Tin Workers admitted some of their more advanced helpers into their amalgamated association in 1876,²⁴ but not till 1889 did this union open its doors to all men employed in and about iron and steel mills.²⁵

Limitations upon the rights and privileges of helpers will be discussed later in this chapter. In this connection, however, it is opportune to point to such restriction as evidence that the journeymen have as a rule concerned themselves with organizing their helpers from selfish rather than benevolent motives. It is difficult, for instance, to have one believe that the marble workers ^{have} ever interested themselves in organizing the helpers primarily for the benefit of the helper, because the Marble Workers persistently refuse to allow their helpers any legal entrance to the position of a mechanic and hence, admission to the mechanic local unions.²⁶

It was pointed out in the preceding chapter that helpers make it difficult for the journeymen in a trade to control the shops of that trade because (1) helpers act as strike breakers (2) they drift into, increase the number of and strengthen non-union shops. The belief

²² Ibid, July, 1903, pp. 586-588.

²³ Proceedings 1911, p. 86. Constitution 1913, p. 57.

²⁴ See Constitution 1877 (?)

²⁵ Constitution, 1879, Proceedings 1899, p. 2686. (?)

²⁶ For a full discussion concerning the promotion of a Marble Workers' helper see Official Journal, August, 1911.

that the helpers are especially liable to thus act contrary to the will and the interests of the mechanics has led many artisans to favor the organizing of journeymen and helpers under the same national union. When helpers have no interests in the welfare of the journeymen, or more exactly, when journeymen manifest no concern for their helpers, these auxiliary workmen make demands and act as strike breakers much more readily than they would do if their common welfare as union brothers were at stake. The likelihood of helpers thus to act in opposition to journeymen when organized separately from them is well illustrated in a difficult between puddlers and their helpers in Chicago. As has been previously pointed out, when the iron puddlers organized as the United Sons of Vulcan only those who were capable of taking charge of a furnace were eligible for membership. Soon trouble arose because in the numerous strikes the helpers would not or at least did not always go out with the puddlers. One reason attributed for the helpers not giving their support to strikes was that they had no general organization and no strike benefits. At the convention in 1872, the president urged that helpers be admitted to the union in order to overcome this difficulty.²⁷ But the committee on the good of the order instead of reporting favorably on the advice of the president, assessed one-half the amount which the puddlers were assessed and in case of a strike that the helpers received one-half the amount of strike benefits paid, to the puddlers.²⁸ This plan was adopted and in some cases appears to have worked successfully..

27 Vulcan Record, August, 1872, p. 23.

28 Ibid p. 48.

In Chicago, however, when the helpers were called together in order that the above scheme might be explained to them, they suprned the plans of the puddlers and formed an association of their own. Later, when a new workman was put on in opposition to the wishes of this organized body of helpers, they went on a strike. The puddlers at great inconvenience to themselves went back to work "Single-handed". The helpers thus deprived of employment, went to Knightsville, Indiana, and took the places of the boilers who were on a strike at that time. ²⁹

The recognition of the common interests of helpers and journeymen, and more especially the failure of journeymen to control helpers and therefore, the shops in which they work have been the immediate causes for a change in the policy of mechanics, with respect to the organization of helpers. But it is essential to note that this common interest, as well as the inability of the journeymen to control the, shops has not remained constant during this transition from one policy to another. These immediate forces have been changed by objective conditions which may be summed up in the phrase division of labor or specialization in work. In other words, there has been an increase in the common interests of mechanics and helpers, and/ar increase in the difficulties in the controlling of the shops by the journeymen, because of a more extended sub-division of labor. To requote Secretary Morrison of the Federation: "This transition in work has brought the journeymen and the helper into closer relation and the action of the different national organizations in organizing the helpers under their jurisdiction, is a

result of this condition". But as has been stated, this change of method in economic production has been a remote rather than an immediate cause of the mechanics change of policy. Therefore, a closer analysis of the change in economic production is necessary in order to understand just why and how such a change should bring a concomitant change in the theory and practice of organizing the workmen within a trade.

In the first place, the two great evils, trade disintegration and an overcrowded trade, incident to the employment of helpers are greatly intensified as the division of labor becomes more minute. Where specialization in work is the rule, the system of having one learn all branches of a trade is sure to decay. Also, the helper provided he is not handicapped by mental or physical disabilities, is practically certain to become an efficient workmen at the operation at which he assists. The result is that soon a large part of the work of a shop is done by those workmen who have never served an apprenticeship in the full sense of the word. In short, specialization in trades and at processes where helpers are employed has given and is giving over the work of the apprentice trained all-around mechanic to the helper trained specialist. With this increase in the number of helper trained workmen and consequent decrease in the relative number of all-around mechanics, it is evident that the journeymen must lose some control formerly exercised over the shops; and to regain this control, they must widen their union so as to include not only those who have become specialists by serving as helpers, but also the helpers themselves. A writer in the Blacksmiths' Journal realizing the significance of these changes, wrote " We have made tools

and machinery and the boy and the helper are using them in ever increasing numbers, with a more than a corresponding decrease in blacksmiths... the apprentice system seems to be becoming obsolete, many corporations preferring to advance helpers to run the forge and the furnace .. Undoubtedly this method has come to stay and we must sooner or later acknowledge it and organize accordingly. In many parts of the country where our unions are established there are very few eligible members and it becomes somewhat burdensome to maintain a good working union and be strong enough to make a demand and expect to get it. And then should any trouble occur, the corporations, can, would, and do get along for months, if necessary, with helpers, heaters and helpersmiths. This is the weak point in our armor where we can easily be defeated and our employers understand this.³⁰

The effect of a minute sub-division of labor and of the introduction of machinery in a trade upon the policy of journeymen with respect to the organization of the helper can be well illustrated by sketching briefly the extension of the boundaries of the Machinist International Association so as to include within its jurisdiction all men of a machine shop except the unskilled helper or laborer. Within the last two decades the nature of the work done and of the skill required in a machine shop has undergone a great change, whereas, a few years ago Machinists work consisted in a few general processes, :turning, fitting and setting up. Now because of the introduction of all kinds of machinery and tools, machinists work has come to consist of numerous specialized jobs. With the introduction of these mechanics and labor

saving tools, it is no longer necessary that every man in a machine shop shall know how to use efficiently each tool or machine therein. Nor is it necessary for one to serve a long term of apprenticeship in order to operate a machine, which work in some cases is quite simple. Asin Cassiers Magazine,³¹ "The twentieth century conception of a machine shop is not an aggregation of intelligent workmen provided with the most efficient tools and apparatus that ingenuity can devise and using them with all the cunning that trained minds can suggest. The shop from the present standpoint is simply a huge machine tool, as void of conscious volition as an automatic screw machine of which the intelligent operator is the manager, and in which lathes and workmen, drills and inspectors nutting machines and laborers are one common plane of non-sentient, co-acting subordination."

Because of the introduction of machinery and the consequent subdivision of labor, it has been quite easy for the employee to curtail the work of the apprentice-trained mechanic by the introduction of the handyman or the helper trained specialist. For with the introduction of each new machine or with the more extended sub-division of work there has arisen the question as to which class of workmen the operation of the new machine or the performance of ^a newly created job falls. The results have been that the regular machinists have lost a large per cent of the work in the shops.

In 1903, in order to overcome this difficulty, the president of the International Association of Machinists advocated the admission

31 Cassiers Magazine, Vol. XXII, p. 440.

of workmen other than full mechanics into membership. He said: "The difficulty we are constantly confronted with is to decide in what consists machinists' work. For instance, in some locomotive shops machinists do setam pipe work and the building of engine works, while in others, this is performed exclusively by the "Handyman". There should be drawn a definite line so that members of our organization should know their constitutional rights and feel that they will be considered in the fulfillment of the same.

In my opinion, we cannot completely solve this problem until we have taken entire control of the machine shop, when we will be in a position to make an agreement covering the employment of all who work therein."³²

Accordingly, the machinists, this same year though not going to the extent advised by the president, provided for the admission of specialized workmen into the union.³³ The jurisdiction of the machinists as thus enlarged, included, according to a report of the president, twenty-five distinct classes of workmen. The handyman and helper questions continued to be the leading topics for convention discussions. Gradually other specialists and machine tenders were made eligible for membership. Finally in 1911, arrangements were made for the organization of helpers in local unions chartered by the International Association of Machinists.³⁴

32 Report, April 1, 1903.

33 Official Journal (International Assn.), July, 1903, p. 586-589.

34 Proceedings 1911, p. 86, Constitution 1912, p. 37.

So far the discussion of the organization of the helper has in the main centered around those unions of artisans which in their early history refused to provide for in any way for the organization of their helpers. However, all early unions did not pursue this policy, for instance, the Mine Workers when first organized, claimed jurisdiction over all workmen about the mines and even the Pressmen who jealously guarded against an overcrowded trade provided for all the workmen in the shops under a single national organization.³⁵

Many unions which were organized after the barriers between journeymen and helpers had begun to disappear and after apprentice regulations had lost some of their sanctity provided at the time of their creation for the organization of helpers in some relation to the journeymen. Thus the Electrical workers, Steam Fitters and Elevator Constructors have never seriously opposed being organized with their assistants.

35 Subordinate Lodge Constitution, 1912, Art. 3, Sec. 3.

CO-ORGANIZATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND HELPERS.

When once an organized body of mechanics has decided that it will be to their advantage to organize their helpers or to join with them in some kind of an allied organization, the next important considerations are the plans or schemes of organization and the status of the helper in his relation to the journeymen. While many plans varying much in detail have been tried, for the present discussion these will all be brought under two general heads (1) the scheme of having helpers and mechanics in separate local unions (2) the scheme of having mechanics and helpers in some local unions.

There are certain general arguments advanced in favor of each of these plans which it will be well to note at this point. It is claimed by those who favor the scheme of having helpers and mechanics in the same local unions that so long as the workmen in a trade meet as distinct classes in separate local bodies there will exist a strong class spirit which will manifest itself in frequent friction between the local orders and that these local misunderstandings will be projected into the National conventions where the Mechanics and helpers meet as a unified body. It is further argued that many grievances of local orders against one another are the results of imaginary injustices which would disappear if all the workmen were brought into the same local lodges.

Again, another point put forth by those who favor the single local organization is that there will not be conflicting demands upon

employers by the separate local unions whose members work in the same shop or shops. Of course it is admitted that in a local union composed of mechanics and helpers there may arise classes of workmen under consideration will have opposing views, but these questions, are threshed out in the union meetings and do not result in conflicting demands on the same employer or employe. To illustrate, a helpers' local union demands that one of its members be promoted to a vacancy in a shop. The journeymen oppose such promotion as being in conflict with their apprentice regulations. As a result, counter demands are made upon the employers who thus become intermediaries between contending forces of the same general union. This gives the employers a good opportunity to bring the unions to terms upon points of disagreement between themselves and the unions. Now this same disagreement might arise where helpers are in a local union with the journeymen, but the difference would be settled within the union and the employers would thus not become a party in the settling of the dispute.

On the other hand, many insist that there are ways and means of overcoming the above mentioned difficulties and that it is best for all concerned to let helpers have their own local organization and manage all the detail matters which concern themselves only.

Since the above arguments are applicable to all organizations alike, it is difficult to tell just why some unions have chosen one of the above plans and some, the other. Undoubtedly, however, pride and prejudice have been more important forces in some instances than in others in favor of the separate local organization for helpers.

Mechanics who in times past opposed the employment or the promotion of helpers and who set much store in the skill of their craft, can much more easily be brought to accept the helpers as members of their national unions than they can to accept them as members of the same subordinate lodges. In the first case helpers and journeymen sit together as members of the same union at rare intervals, but in the latter case, they must come together as brother members at each meeting of the respective local lodges. The journeymen rebel at thus putting themselves on what they consider an equal social basis with the helpers. Therefore, the plan of having helpers and mechanics in different local unions has predominated in those trades where the mechanics so long either ignored or opposed the organizing of the helpers. At least, this has been the initial plan of the majority of such unions for bringing the helpers within the jurisdiction of the National unions of journeymen. However, as class pride has become less tense there has been a growing sentiment favoring the abolition of separate local lodges for helpers. In the case of the Boiler Makers, for instance, this change in sentiment became so great as to bring about positive action whereby provisions were made in 1912, for having journeymen and assistants become members of the same local lodges. ³⁵ In other instances unions which formerly absolutely prohibited helpers from gaining admission to local journeymen's unions have modified their policy so far as to admit helpers into the mechanics lodges where conditions are not favorable for maintaining a separate helpers' local union. For instance, in 1911 when an attempt was made to incorporate such a condition in the Machinist Constitution there was such bitter

35 Subordinate Lodge Constitution 1912, Art 3, Sec. 3.

opposition that the matter was dropped.³⁶ But in 1913, a referendum vote favored granting to helpers this privilege of conditional admission to journeymen's lodges.³⁷ All the unions which now organize the helpers make similar provisions for organizing helpers with the mechanics, where conditions are unfavorable for a separate lodge for the helpers. The two schemes of organization having thus been set forth in a very general way, a more specific study of the co-organization of mechanics and helpers will now be made. Since the problems of a union which are peculiar to the organization of helpers and mechanics as one national body are largely the same in character if not in degree whether helpers and mechanics are in separate or the same local lodges. The first of these schemes will be studied at length and the second examined only to the extent of developing points of difference between the two.

Co-organization contrary to the expectations^{ta} of many has not proved to be a "cure-all" for the evils incident to the employment of helpers in a trade. With the helper unorganized friction over the work and promotion of helpers is for most part between journeymen and employees. With the organization of the helper and the mechanic within a single national union, questions growing out of the use of helpers become more distinctly internal union problems. Since one of the union purposes of journeymen in organizing helpers ~~in organizing helpers~~ in connection with themselves has been to control the encroachments of the helper upon the trade, as might be expected much friction

36 Proceedings 1911, 146-147

37 Official Circular, No. 36.

is the result. The chief sources of friction between mechanics and helpers when organized together are (1) subordination of the helper to the mechanic (2) the wage scale (3) mechanics working with non-union helpers and vice versa (4) jurisdictional disputes (5) promotion of helpers.

This subordination of helpers often begins with the issuing of charters. It is customary for the national unions to refuse to charter a local union of helpers without the application for a charter be first approved by the local union of journeymen in the locality where it is proposed that a helpers' local be established. Thus in the Constitution prepared by the journeymen machinists for their helpers, it is stated that, "where there are a sufficient number of helpers employed to maintain a lodge, charters shall be issued subject to the approval of the local or distance lodge having jurisdiction over that locality."³⁸ While this approval may be required partly to prevent the organization of lodges under unfavorable conditions, it is also doubtless designed to prevent the organization of helpers where there is utter lack of harmony between helpers and mechanics and where such organization would obviously promote fraternal strife. At any rate, this provision brings the helpers in a locality into subordination to the journeymen.

In most instances, where a national union is made up of both mechanics' and helpers' local unions, the mechanics insist that the helpers' lodges shall be subordinate in some way to their own, they argue that inasmuch as the helpers must be under the control of the mechanics while

38 Constitution to govern Machinist Helpers' Organization, Art. 11, P. 67.

at work that they should likewise be under their control in the organization of which both constitute a part. They also contend that inasmuch as the mechanics are the superiors of helpers in experience and position that they should, at least in a case of last resort, be allowed to control in matters which are of common concern to mechanics, and helpers. This subordination of helpers is brought about in various ways. In some cases control by the mechanic is absolute and in other cases the helper is restrained from independent action on important questions only. For instance the Tile Layers in 1904 passed a resolution that tile layers' helpers should submit all demands to the tile layers' locals in respective cities.³⁹ The Machinists constitution states that "no local of helpers shall be permitted to become involved in a strike without obtaining the sanction of the journeymen's local or distinct lodge under whose jurisdiction it is working, and the Grand Lodge."⁴⁰ Still in other cases subordination is brought about in the means and methods devised for settling disputes between the two associated local unions. The Boiler Makers formerly provided that where a boiler makers' local division and a helpers' local division are unable to agree upon terms of employment or upon questions relating to their mutual interests that such matters shall be referred to the international president whose decision should be binding unless an appeal should be taken to the executive council.⁴¹ When cognizance

39 Proceedings 1904, p. 67.

40 Constitution to govern Machinists Helpers Organization, Art. 1, Sec. 2

41 Subordinate Lodge Constitution 1908, Art. XVI, Sec. 17.

is taken of the fact that the executive council at that time consisted of international president and seven vice-presidents of whom two were helpers⁴² it is readily seen that the journeymen had complete control over the helpers provided they saw fit to use the power which the constitution conferred upon them.

But whatever may be the specific way in which mechanics have left or are keeping the helpers under their control, there is much friction over this policy of the journeymen and the national conventions are usually occasions for helpers to contend for equal rights and privileges. For illustration, the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants have a national Board of Directors which is composed of a president, three vice-presidents and a secretary-treasurer.⁴³ Up till 1900, only one of these offices was open to the assistant pressmen.⁴⁴ Consequently, they were much dissatisfied and claimed that they were not getting their just dues. In the Convention of 1900, an amendment was offered which provided that two of the vice-presidents should be assistant pressmen.⁴⁵ After a warm controversy the amendment passed the assistants unanimously, voting for it while a large majority of the pressmen opposed it even though they were still to be left with a majority of the Board.⁴⁶

The formation of the wage scale is another source of frequent internal trouble. Both helpers and mechanics over-estimate their own

42 Constitution 1908, Art. 1, Sec. 5, Art IV, Sec. 2.

43 Constitution, 1913, Art. I, Sec. I.

44 Constitution 1899, Art. II, Sec. I.

45 Proceedings 1900, p. 31.

46

skill as compared with that of their fellow workmen. The helpers contend for a less the journeymen for a greater disparity between the wages of the two classes. For example, in 1906, there was trouble between the Steam fitters and their helpers in Philadelphia over the wages to be received by the helpers who contended for thirty cents an hour. The fitters claimed that they had agreed to work for twentyfour cents an hour. To this the helpers replied that it was none of the business of the fitters what the helpers received for their work. The helpers struck in an effort to secure their demands for an increased wage, but the journeymen refused to support their demands and went to work with non-union helpers.⁴⁷ Friction over the wage scale is especially liable to occur where piece work prevails and where helpers are paid by the mechanics who receive from the firm the entire wage for turning out the product.⁴⁸

A third source of frequent controversy between helpers and mechanics is over one party or the other working with non-un^{ion}ists. As a rule there is an agreement or an understanding between co-organized helpers and journeymen that members of neither class will work with non-union workmen. The enforcement of this agreement largely depends upon a third factor, the employers. If the union be strong as compared with the employers, it may be carried out to the very letter. But if the local unions be too weak to cope with the employers, the agreement between helpers and journeymen will doubtless be broken. If it be the mechanics who violate the agreement the helpers will accuse them of disloyalty and of

47 Proceedings 1906, p. 46, also, p. 67.

48 See Chapter II pp.

and of not having the welfare of the helper at heart. Likewise, the mechanics denounce the helpers if they work with non-union journeymen. For example, the extent to which disputes of this kind arise is indicated in the action of the Steam Fitters in 1897. At the convention of this year a committee was appointed to draw up a resolution which would tend to create a more harmonious feeling between fitters and helpers. The Chief recommendation of this committee was that the clause of the constitution with reference to union fitters for working with non-union helpers and vice versa be strictly enforced.⁴⁹

Jurisdictional disputes between helpers and journeymen are of two kinds, disputes over (1) work, (2) workmen. As was pointed out in the preceding chapter, there is continual complaint in most trades where helpers are employed, that they are allowed to encroach upon the work of the journeymen. When helpers are unorganized or organized independently of the mechanics of a trade and of the American Federation of Labor, there is no such thing as a jurisdictional dispute between helpers and mechanics. The helper not being recognized by the journeymen as having any jurisdiction over any part of the work of a trade, all controversies over the employment and promotion of helpers are: between the mechanics and the employers. But when journeymen and helpers are members of separate local unions and yet under the same national jurisdiction, jurisdictional disputes between the locals are likely to occur. Especially is this true where the use of helpers is the result of a division of labor rather than of a physical necessity. If there be two

49 Proceedings 1897, p. 31.

distinct classes of laborers in a trade, there must be some line of division in their work. This line wherever it may be drawn is quite likely to be more or less arbitrarily located and consequently affords a fruitful source of contention between mechanics and helpers. So closely associated with disputes over work as to be inseparable from them are disputes as to jurisdiction over the workmen. In fact, the two sometimes are identical as it is usually implied that jurisdiction over one means jurisdiction over the other. For this reason, no attempt will be made to differentiate between the two. The essential points in both can be shown in a brief sketch of some contentions between the assistants and the pressmen of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants Union of America. This union grants separate charters to local lodges of pressmen and assistants.⁵⁰ When the Webb press began to supplant the flat bed presses it was obvious that to allow the Assistants' Union jurisdiction over the assistants on the Webb presses would give them the control of the Webb press rooms. For all the workmen on a Webb press except one or two are assistants in the sense that they work under others who have charge of the presses. Consequently, the local union of pressmen began to extend their jurisdiction to the Assistants on the Webb presses. The assistants objected to this policy of the pressmen and for years a larger part of the time at the National conventions were taken up over this question in its various forms. For instance, in 1899, the Franklin Association, number 23, of New York, entered a protest against the Adams Cylinder and Press Printers, number 51, of New York

50 Charters are now granted to various classes of workmen See Constitution 1913, Art. 1.

for assuming jurisdiction over the webb press assistants.⁵¹ They made their protests "on the grounds that the receipt of these assistants by a pressmen's union is unconstitutional, for they are on the average incompetent pressmen and not receiving the pressmen's scale of wages, and that in cases where they are as, for instance, in New York, the pressmen's organization have lowered their scale so as to steal them". They further claimed "that in every city where there is no webb press assistants' organization, they are always affiliated with the assistants' union."⁵² They deemed "The action of No. 51 in assuming jurisdiction over webb press assistants a flagrant violation not only of the constitution, but of our rights."⁵³

The pressmen justified the extension of their jurisdiction mainly on three grounds: (1) competency rather than the nature of the position held should determine a man's eligibility for membership in the pressmen's union. The so-called assistant pressmen were men who had had four or more years experience in press rooms and were competent pressmen, though they were working under another union who had charge of the press (2) that distinguishing assistants from pressmen and thus on the basis of position held they should join would be very impractical. For, inasmuch as a man may be in charge of a press one week but the next week hold a sub-ordinate position, the policy of determining to what local union a man should belong, according to the kind of job he held, would mean that there could be an endless confusion by reason of members changing from assistants' union to pressmen's union and vice

51 See Convention Proceedings, pp 45-119.

52 Proceedings 1899, p. 45.

53 Ibid, p. 46

versa. Their note was: once a pressman always a pressman. (3) They claimed that pressmen should have jurisdiction over all workmen in a web press room, otherwise, there would be trouble between the different local lodges having men working on the same presses.

In order to settle the dispute between the pressmen and the assistants on this point the following resolution was offered; "In accordance with the law as laid down by our International Constitution and by-laws, the pressmen have only jurisdiction over pressmen; therefore, be it resolved, "That that part of the constitution of No. 51 which applies to a scale for assistant pressmen be stricken out."⁵⁴ This resolution passed the convention⁵⁵ but on reconsideration was lost,⁵⁶ and the convention closed without any definite action. Consequently, year after year the contest over the pressmen's assistant waxed warmer and warmer completely overshadowing all other questions.

At the convention in 1904 an amendment to the constitution was proposed by a delegate from local union number 23 of New York to the effect that fly boys and carriers in newspaper offices should be members of the Assistants' Union.⁵⁷ In many localities these workmen were not organized at all, so the assistants pressed their claims on the ground that all the workmen in a press room should be organized and that since the fly boys and carriers were not eligible for

54 Ibid, p. 46,
55 Ibid, p. 105,
56 Ibid, p. 114-118,
57 Ibid, p. 19.

membership in the pressmen's union that it was the duty of the feeders and the assistants to organize them. With the exception of claiming that these workmen in dispute were capable of taking charge of a press, the pressmen opposed the resolution on exactly the same grounds that they had opposed the assistants' unions having jurisdiction over the webb press assistants. It was asserted that many pressmen had, on account of some disability, been forced into low grade work and that it would not be fair to force them back into the assistants union. While it was admitted that the majority of the paper handlers were not eligible for membership in the pressmen's union, it was urged that it was best for such laborers to be under the jurisdiction of the pressmen with whom they worked rather than under the jurisdiction of a body composed for most part of those who worked in an altogether different kind of press room. This amendment was lost and as the struggle continued.

While various decisions were reached on this point from time to time and while the constitution and by-laws were changed so often that confusion was the result, it seemed impossible to ever satisfy both parties to the dispute. Truly it was a house divided against itself. At present the International Constitution provides that "all members of Subordinate Unions employed on rotary webb presses, on book and magazine work, in the jurisdiction of local pressmen's unions as brakemen, tension men, oilers, assistants and so-called assistants shall identify themselves with the local assistants' unions in whose jurisdiction they are working."⁵⁸ Also, "The Assistants Union shall

58 Constitution 1913, By-laws, sec. 39.

have the right to organize all help working in webb press rooms for whom the Pressmen's Union have not provided a scale."⁵⁹

A question of even more concern to the mechanics and helpers of a trade who are members of the same national body but of different local orders, is the promotion of the helper to work known as mechanic's work and his transfer from the helpers local union to that of the journeymen. As previously stated, it is somewhat inconsistent for a national union pledged to the welfare of all its members, to organize helpers and at the same time deny them the right to be promoted when the employers are willing to pay them mechanics' wages. Consequently, most unions when organizing the helpers of its trade have made some concessions by granting them the privileges of having all or a part of the journeymen's apprentices come from their ranks, or have made the helpers apprentices in the sense that they are the legal learners of the trade. These policies were fully described in chapter three of this study in a discussion of the modified restrictive policy of controlling the helper, and need not be given further attention here.

In a few instances, unions have organized the helpers, or at least made provisions, for their organization, without any provision whatever for their future advancement either in work or in promotion to the mechanics' local unions. Thus in 1911, when the Machinists decided to organize the machinists helpers under the jurisdiction of the International Association of Machinists, it was stated that "No helper can be advanced in the trade to the detriment of journeymen machinists or or apprentices."⁶⁰ Also, at this same time it was one of the declared

60 Constitution 1913, By-laws, Art.III, sec. 3.

aims of the machinists "to endeavor to secure the establishment of a legal apprenticeship of four years."⁶¹ The effect of the accomplishment of this aim would be to increase the difficulty of the helper members of the union in being promoted to more responsible and renumerative work. However, by an amendment to the machinist constitution of 1913, it was provided that one-half of all apprentices might be taken from the ranks of the helpers affiliated with the International Association of Machinists.⁶² At the present time, union, except the Marble Workers, which has made provision for the organization of helpers has some arrangement whereby there is at least a possibility of an efficient helper becoming a mechanic. In most cases this possibility is very remote, so much so that the helpers are continually trying to have the National unions adopt a more liberal policy. When helpers are in local unions to themselves, where they have opportunities to develop their qualities of leadership and aggressive-ness, they are likely to formulate schemes for removing those constitutional barriers which restrict their opportunity for promotion.

61 Constitution (Platform) p.3.

62 See Official circular No. 46. The amendment reads: "However, a machinists helper, who has been a member of the International Association of Machinists Helpers for two years in continuous good standing and has worked as a machinists helper for two years in the shop where he desires to become an apprentice, and is not more than twenty-five (25) years of age, may become a machinists apprentice and shall serve three years as such, and be governed by the same laws and rules as govern apprentices, provided the number of apprentices taken from machinist helpers does not exceed at any time the number of regularly indentured apprentices."

The struggle of helpers to remove all union restrictions as to their advancement like the question of jurisdictional disputes can well be shown in a brief description of a few typical contests in the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants Union. Though the struggle of the Assistants to have all barriers to their progress removed has extended practically over the entire life of the Union, it is not necessary to make an exhaustive chronological study of this issue between journeymen and assistants in order to illustrate the nature of the contentions therein.

Up until 1903, there was in the constitution of the Pressmen and Assistants a clause which stated that "No subordinate Pressmen's union shall admit to full membership any person who has not served an apprenticeship of at least four years in a press room. Rigid examination as to the competency of applicants shall be made by a committee of the local union."⁶³ In 1889, the assistants pressed for the following addition to the above clause: "Said four years in a press room as a feeder to be considered as ample time to cover apprentice laws entitling him to full membership in pressmen's union when he receives the full scale of wages; he to have at the time of admission a paid up card of membership in the feeders and helpers union."⁶⁴ At this time the International Constitution provided that apprentices were "to be taken from the Assistants and Feeders' Unions working under the jurisdiction of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants Union."⁶⁵ but as one apprentice only was to be allowed for every four

63 Constitution 1898-1903, Art. XXII, Sec. 4.

64 Proceedings, 1899, p. 69.

65 Constitution 1898, Art. XXIII, Sec. 1.



Journeymen, the prospects for assistants to become pressmen were not hopeful to the members of the assistants and feeders' local unions, hence the move to allow any feeder to become a pressman and eligible for membership in the pressmen's unions when that feeder should be able to command pressmen's wages. The laws committee reported unfavorable on the amendment and their report was sustained⁶⁶ which was doubtless due to the fact that the pressmen in the convention outnumbered the feeders and helpers or assistants.

It was contended by the feeders and the assistants, also by those journeymen who favored the amendment, that any member of the International union should be allowed to hold any position for which he was competent and that when he was promoted to a pressman's position and received pressmen's wages that he should be allowed membership in the pressmen's local union in his locality. Such a restriction as existed they said was in favor of the non-union assistant or feeder, for when a man who belongs to no union secures a job as a pressman he is at once admitted to the union. Another reason given as to why artificial obstructions should be removed, and let position and scale of wages determine promotion from one local to another, was the fact that as a delegate asserted: "There is not a man in this association who can define for one that line of demarcation between the gradations which exist between a feeder, an apprentice and a pressman."⁶⁷ On the

66 Proceedings, 1899, p. 69.

67 Proceedings, 1899, p. 71.

other hand the pressmen opposed the amendment on the ground that a restriction upon the promotion of the helpers was necessary for the protection of the men who had served their four years apprenticeship.

In 1903, the International Constitution was changed⁸⁰ as to allow the number of apprentices to be regulated by the local pressmen's unions.⁶⁸ However, the struggle over this question of promotion has continued and has in no wise become strictly a local issue. In the first place, the attempts of the assistants to have the National Union to legislate in their behalf have not ceased and in the second place, appeals to the International Union or to the International Board of directors have been numerous. These appeals have usually been in the nature of a petition asking the general union to force local pressmen's unions to accept as members those of the assistants union who were doing pressmen's work and receiving pressmen's wages. Thus, "The Franklin Association No. 18, protests against the Web Pressmen's Union No. 3, of Boston, for refusing to accept certificates of membership of two members of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union, and requests that this convention compel Webb Pressmen's Union No. 3, to accept the same."⁶⁹

The gist of these local controversies and appeals can be well understodd from the following quotation from the President's report in 1903:

"Some of the appeals and the decisions thereon will come up before this convention. Chief among them is one from Denver Pressmen's Union No. 40, appealing from my and the former Board of Directors decision that a member of an assistants union who has worked four years in a press room and is given the position of 'Journeyman

69 Proceedings, 1899, p. 105.

Pressman", is entitled to hold such position, even if the Pressmen's Union decide otherwise, or refuse to admit him to membership in the Pressmen's Union, under whose jurisdiction he may be working. This appeal as I am informed by No. 40, is not brought with any spirit of narrowness on its part, they only desiring to have the Convention decide whether it is wise policy on the part of the International to allow members of assistant unions this privilege, even though such assistant does receive the scale of wages as supported by the Pressmen's Union in whose jurisdiction he may be working, and his competency vouched for by the Pressman foreman of the place where such assistant may be working, as a 'journeyman pressman'. No. 40, further contends that if such methods are allowed of the International it will not be conducive to the best interests of the Pressmen's craft in producing skilled and competent 'journeyman pressman' in line of succession. To which the board in its reply sustaining its actions points out the right of all members of the I. P. P. and A. W. under article XXVll, Sec. 2 of its International laws-70

70 This law reads as follows: A member of any Subordinate Union may work at any branch of the business; provided he shall transfer his membership and receive the consent from his union and from the union in whose jurisdiction he desires to work, and that he receives the scale of wages of said union. Should either of said unions fail to agree as to the qualification of said member, he shall be allowed to work at the branch chosen by him pending a decision from the Board of Directors.

The above contention has been the cause of several of a like nature during the past year and have been decided by myself in like manner as in the case of No. 40, many of the Pressmen's Unions contending also that so long as they have members out of work, no assistant should be allowed the right of advancement. That spirit of contention of the part of some Pressmen's Unions is too narrow for the I. P. P. and A. W. to entertain, but I agree with No. 40 that it is the duty of this Convention to decide in positive terms as to where the assistants' rights begin and where they end".-71

Two important points to be noted in these words of the President are (1) That the decision of the Board and of the President was anomalous in that it allowed a workman under the jurisdiction of one branch of a union to do work under the jurisdiction of another branch, (2) The President and Board of Directors, of whom the majority were Pressmen, favored a broad liberal policy toward the helper. It is a significant fact that in practical all unions where the helpers and journeymen are organized into a single national union, the officers have advocated less selfish policies toward the assistants than have the majority of the members of the national unions. In many instances the National Union leaders have championed measures designed to increase the privileges of the helpers, long before the unions were brought to accept them.

In the national organizations which provide that journeymen and their helpers shall be members of the same local lodges the subordination of helpers is brought about differently than it is in unions which have distinct local lodges for helpers and mechanics.

A very common rule designed to keep the helpers so to speak "under the thumb" of the journeymen is to limit the number of helpers in a lodge. For instance, it is a regulation of the National Union of Elevator Constructors, "That the number of helpers shall never exceed the number of mechanics".⁻⁷²

In some unions where this policy is not laid down in the national laws, the local lodges put similar limitations upon the number of helpers in a lodge. For example, it is a regulation of a local union of Electrical Workers in Baltimore that "The number of helpers admitted to this local shall not exceed one to each two wiremen in good standing in local No. 28".⁻⁷³

It is likewise the policy of most unions to see to it that the number of helper delegates to national conventions shall never exceed the number of journeymen delegates. The Elevator Constructors provide that, "Locals entitled to more than one delegate may send a helper as one."⁻⁷⁴ When this is connected with the rule that the helpers in the local shall never exceed the mechanics in number, it is evident that the helpers have no possibility of getting control of the national conventions.

72- Constitution and By-laws, 1910, p. 20.

73- Section 71.

74- Constitution and By-Laws, 1910, article 2, section 4.

The zealousness with which mechanics regard their right to authority in the national conventions is shown by the following. In 1904 an amendment was offered to the Constitution of the Tile Layers' Union, which provided, "That where local is composed of layers and helpers together sending more than one delegate to the convention, that one delegate shall be a helper." This amendment though granting very restrictive privileges to the helpers was lost.

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In unions which have helpers and journeymen in the same local lodges, wage scale disagreements, dissatisfaction over members working with non-union members, jurisdictional disputes and contentions concerning the promotion of the helper are similar in character but less tense in degree than in unions where the helpers and journeymen are in separate local lodges. The explanation is simple. Where helpers are always in meetings under the domination of the mechanics, they do not have the opportunities for launching movements designed for their betterment as they do when they meet in associations of their own. While the helpers may express dissatisfaction over various policies of the local of which they are a part, they do not usually succeed in crystalizing this dissatisfaction in such a way as to bring about any unified action on their part. In fact if the helpers in a locality under this form of organization have grievances, about

the only way they have of satisfying them is by open rebellion, the success of which would depend largely upon their strength and importance in a trade as compared with the mechanics. Not being a distinct unit of the national organization, they have no way to bring local disputes before the general conventions for settlement. Consequently, practically all contentions between helpers and journeymen are for most part local in character and in the matter of their adjustment.

In a few unions like the Elevator Constructors and the Electrical Workers where the helpers are the legal learners of their trades and where no apprentice system intervenes between the helper and journeymanship, the difficulties of the combined organization are much less than where efforts are made to enforce apprenticeship regulations, and thus compel the helper if he ever legally becomes a mechanic to pass through the intermediary state or apprenticeship period. Some unions like The Mine Workers, which are industrial in their form of organization, put helpers and journeymen on practically an equal basis and have no apprenticeship regulations. Therefore, in such cases, helper problems which have disturbed most organizations containing helpers are not present at all or exist in a very modified form.

CHAPTER 1V.

ENFORCEMENT OF UNION POLICIES.

1.

Obstacles to enforcement.

There are certain obstacles which partly or completely prevent the execution of union policies with respect to the helper. These may be stated as follows: (1) The indifference or the hostile attitude of those directly affected by the policies; (2) The creation of non-union shops by a policy of strict enforcement; (3) The extension of unionism; (4) Lack of a definite line separating the work of helpers from that of journeymen; (5) Non-uniformity of enforcement by different local unions; and (6) The decay of apprentice system.

There are three classes of persons whose lack of support if not their open opposition to a union's helper policies hinders the execution of the rules designed to put such policies into effect. These are (1) The journeymen themselves; (2) The employers; and (3) The helpers.

The difficulties thrown by journeymen in the way of enforcement of these policies will be considered under five heads, (a) The desire of artisans to perform highly skilled work only; (b) The innate desire of individuals to be in positions of authority over others; (c) The desire of workmen to exploit fellow workmen;

(d) Personal friendship between mechanics and helpers and (e) class differences and prejudices. All of these have to do more or less with the employment and promotion of helpers; the third concerns also their payment; while the fourth and fifth affect to a considerable extent their organization.

It is almost a universal fact that when a man becomes in a high degree skilled in his trade that he is strongly inclined to restrict his work to the more skilled and technical parts of the trade. He takes delight in doing that which others cannot do or which they do with great difficulty. In addition to thus satisfying his desires, to do highly skilled and respectable work, he will doubtless obtain greater remuneration for his services. It is obvious that if a particular employer can afford to pay a certain amount for the production of an article that there is a possibility for the skilled artisan to obtain a higher daily wage when the low grade work is done by a cheap workman, than when the skilled men do all the work themselves. This desire of workmen to reach the topmost rungs of the ladder both in work requiring a high degree of skill and in the wage received has been a very important factor in the increase of employment and promotion of helpers in many trades, and has been a great stumbling block to unions in their efforts to restrict or abolish helpers of any kind. The testimony of both the employers and prominent unionists bears out the truth of these assertions.

The editor of the Plumbers Official Journal in commenting the disposition of every journeyman to demand a helper said: "Plumbers are ashamed to be seen carrying overalls, cleaning and polishing tools."¹ Organizer Burke of the Plumbers, said: "We have no one to blame but ourselves as the journeymen in all the eastern country are too lazy to carry their own kits. The majority want a boy with them all the time. In some cases, I have known men to quit work where they were refused a helper."² In speaking along this same line the president of the International Association of Machinists said: You will notice from the report on strikes that we have had several strikes against the introduction of the "handymen" system. The employers are not to blame for this in all cases. Now and then we find instances where machinists refuse to do a certain class of work. As a result the employer is forced to employ whomever he can to do the rest of the work."³

In almost perfect harmony with the above statements are the following from prominent employers. John S. Perry, a former stove manufacturer of Albany, in commenting on the "Berkshire" system said: "From time immemorial, previous to the formation of the molders' union, it was a custom almost without exception for a molder to employ at least one helper and not unfrequently two and even three. It would have been considered a handicap if they had been denied this privilege."⁴ A Chicago employer in answer to some questions asked

1 Official Journal.

2 Official Journal, Dec. 1908, p. 10

3 Machinists Journal, June, 1903, p. 486.

4 Iron Molders Journal, May, 1877.

by the Labor Commission affirmed that they worked as many "handymen" as they would do if they ran a non-union shop. By way of explanation he said: "We find that while machinists may object to "handymen" doing the work for which they are competent, they themselves do not wish to do this class of work, and in this case have dropped their complaints if told they would have to do it if they did not allow the "handymen" to do it."⁵

Closely connected with the desire of a man to do skilled work only is that innate desire to control and supervise other workmen, thus exalting his own importance and position. A writer in the Iron Molders' Journal complains about this as follows: "Let us pay a visit to a car wheel shop. What do we find? Two men working together; one is a molder, the other is a helper. Between them they do two days' work. The helper prepares the chill, inserts the pattern, does all the running, and the molder finishes the molds. But if it is blue Monday, the molder lays back upon his dignity and the helper becomes both molder and helper for the day."⁶

The third reason why some journeymen are loath to part with the helper and to have have his work restricted, is due to the proneness of journeymen to exploit the work of others. Journeymen who are paid by the day, by allowing their helpers to encroach upon mechanics work are thus relieved of work supposed to be performed by themselves. At the Convention of Machinists in 1911, when the helper question, as was customary, was being threshed out, a delegate

5 11th Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor, p. 221.

6 Iron Molders Journal, Oct. 1, 1873, p. 132.

said: "The trouble is not with the helper or the specialist but with the machinist who is directly responsible for the advancement of the helper in the shop, oftentimes teaching him to do the work which he is paid as a machinist to do himself." ⁷ If the journeymen are paid by the piece each of them is usually anxious to have a helper or helpers, that he may exploit them for the sake of money gain. For example, before the organization of the Iron Molders Union, each molder in order to make a profit from the work of others, hired one or more helpers. Whether the journeyman was paid by the piece or so much for each complete stove, for both methods were practiced at different times and at different places, the greater the number of apprentices directed by him, the greater the output and consequently, the larger his wages. Later on the number of "Berkshires" allowed each journeyman was limited by union regulations because of the rapidity with which the trade was being recruited. Many of the older members complained bitterly and evaded the intent of the regulation by adopting a boy, for the union recognized the right of a journeyman to teach his own son." ⁸ Likewise, the experience of the Iron Steel and Tin workers, and the Potters has demonstrated that any attempt to regulate the payment of the helper by the establishment of a uniform rate will be evaded by the journeymen when it is to their financial interests to do so.

Not unfrequently it happens, so state many trade union leaders, that union regulations restricting helpers to unskilled work are violated by journeymen who for some reason have a peculiar personal

⁷ Proceedings, 1911, p. 148

⁸ Motley, Apprenticeship in American Trade unions, p. 24

interest in their helpers. This personal interest may arise as a result of family or neighborly relations or from long and intimate association of the journeyman and his helper. Again, this same personal interest in a helper often prompts a mechanic, aided by his friends, to secure his helper protégé recognition as a mechanic worthy of union membership.

Social inequality growing out of class and race prejudice on the part of journeymen oftenthwart the policy of a national union concerning the helper. In some sections the mechanics, regardless of the regulations of their general union, absolutely refuses to do anything which would tend to obliterate the social differences between them and their helpers. When the Blacksmiths Union made plans to have helpers in their trade become the legal learners of the trade, the blacksmiths in the South objected because their helpers were mostly negroes and to have allowed them to become smiths would have meant association in the same local lodges. This the white smiths would not for a moment tolerate and this policy of the national union virtually became void, so far as the South was concerned.⁹

The retarding influence upon union helper policies has to do chiefly with the employment and promotion of helpers. Sometimes, however, mechanics seriously interfere with a national union's policy in organizing the helper. As has been shown in the preceding chapter, social inequality and prejudice have frequently determined a union's plans in organizing helpers. This same spirit or difference has often prevented the organization of the helpers after the national union had decided

9 Statement made to the writer by the President of the Blacksmiths' Union

to organize them. The national body is usually composed of the men of a trade who have more liberal views than has the average workman in that trade. Therefore, the national convention frequently takes a stand much in advance of what some local unions are prepared to accept. For instance, it is the declared policy of the National Union of Tile Layers to have all tile layers' helpers organized, yet because of the prejudice against the negro, it has been impossible to carry out this policy in the South where practically all helpers in the trade are negroes. The mechanics simply refuse to allow the negroes to be organized in any relation whatever to themselves.¹⁰ In other trades, instances are numerous where class prejudice through the medium of local unions has in a great measure frustrated the plan of the national association to organize all auxiliary workmen.

In unions like the teamsters where the rules often demand but never restrict the use of the helpers, it is obvious in the light of previous discussions, that the union journeyman is not a hinderance in the carrying out of such rules, for regulations of this character tend to aid rather than to retard the fulfillment of the Artisan's desire to escape from the performance of rough, unskilled work, and also his desire to be a kind of overseer of others with whom he works.

The group of persons who perhaps are most active in obstructing union legislation with respect to the helper is the employing class. That employers do not readily yield to the dictates of the unions with regard to the employment, work and promotion of helpers is indicated

10 So stated Secretary of National Association in an interview with the writer.

in the declaration of principles of the National Metal Trades association. The following quotation from one of these principles illustrates well the position of employees on these questions: "Since we, the employers, are responsible for work turned out by our workmen, we must have full discretion to designate the men we consider competent to perform the work and to determine the conditions under which that work shall be prosecuted, the question of competency of the men being determined solely."¹¹ In accordance with this principle this same association declares that "the number of apprentices, helpers and handymen to be employed will be determined solely by the employer".¹² A similar rule of the National Founderss 'Association is that "the number of apprentices herlpers and handymen will be determined solely by the requirements of the employer".¹³

While these declarations may be partly the expressions of a spirit of independence on the part of the employers there are strong economic reasons why they do not wish to be restricted in the employment and work of helpers. Auxiliary workmen may be a source of profit to the employer because of economy (1) in the use of labor; (2) in supplying sufficiency of labor in times of general trade activity, and , (3) in the use of machinery.

In many trades where the character of the work is such that one or more persons must work together or where work can be subdivided into skilled and unskilled parts but must be performed as a unit, the employers favor the use of helpers. Their plea is in many cases work can be done as well and as quickly by one skilled craftsman

11 The Review, March, 1914, p. V

12 Ibid P. VI

13 Ibid P. III

working in conjunction with one or more less skilled as by two or more expert mechanics. For example, it is generally admitted that a steam fitter and a good helper can do as much construction work as can two steam fitters working together and what is more, if two journeymen work together it is practically sure that one of them will serve in the relation of a helper to the other. Likewise, where it is possible to sub-divide work into skilled and unskilled parts, it is to the employers interest to make such/^adivision of work and employ labor corresponding in skill to the work to be done. Thus it is an expensive business for contracting plumbers and steam fitters to have heavy material carried to the place of construction by journeymen who receive from four to five dollars per day.

Also it is to the interests of employers to be unrestricted in the use of helpers whenever such use will enable the high priced mechanic to continue uninterruptedly at highly skilled work. On this point we quote from Mr. Perry, stove manufacturer as follows: "A large portion of the flasks requires two persons to lift off and close. Consequently, if there are no helpers, molders are subject to constant interruptions in assisting each other. Valuable time is lost by skilled workmen."

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Another reason why employers do not wish to be restricted in the employment of helpers is due to the fluctuations in business and especially to the need for workmen in times of general trade activity. Usually there are in a town or city only a sufficient number of journeymen to meet the ordinary demands of the different trades. When

a rush comes on and the supply of mechanics is exhausted, the employers wish where possible to advance their work by employing more helpers and having them do the less skilled parts of the work which is sometimes performed by full mechanics. For instance, in a season when building is very active, master plumbers often desire to employ helpers to take from the journeymen all the labor possible, in order that a contract may be finished within a specified time. At a National Convention of Master plumbers in 1885, one of the delegates said: "Yet the fluctuations of our business are of such a nature that from necessity young men, men must for a longer or shorter period of time¹⁵ be employed as helpers for the journeymen." However, the speaker recognized the truthfulness of the assertions of the journeymen plumbers that such a system is fruitful of evils, for in a continuation of his remarks he said: "These men soon travel from shop to shop seeking employment. This system needs attention."

In some industries manufacturers claim that by using helpers they are often saved the cost of duplicating machinery and patterns. Mr. Perry, whom we have previously quoted, says in this connection: "Such aid is important to the manufacturer. A molder alone can put up thirty of one of the large pieces of a stove, while the demand for these might be say forty pieces a day. With a helper he might put up forty and save duplicating patterns. We have saved in this way thousands of dollars."¹⁶

For the very same reasons that it is often advantageous to the employers to use helpers, it is advantageous to them to promote helpers. It might be added further that from the standpoint of the

¹⁵ Proceedings National Assn. of Master Plumbers, 1885, p. 181.

¹⁶ Iron Molders Journal, 1877.



of the employer, promotion from the ranks of the auxiliary workmen is preferable, because it gives him a wider field from which to choose advanced workmen, thus enabling him to employ a selective process in the promotion of his employees to positions requiring skill and responsibility. 17

It is readily seen that for the reasons herein given that the employers may not always be in harmony with the policies of the unions with respect to the employment, work and promotion of helpers. In fact, if they were there would be little necessity for the crystalizing of such policies into very definite and positive rules. The extent to which the employers will hinder the execution of such policies as were outlined in chapter II of this study, will of course depend upon the economic loss which the enforcement of any union rule would bring to them. If the loss be slight, the employers might yield without any considerable opposition. On the other hand, if the loss be great, the employer might resist such regulation to the extent perhaps that he would temporarily shut down his plant rather than yeild to the demands of the union.

The third class of persons which often acts as a hinderance to the enforcement of union helper policies is the helper class itself. It is the interest of this class in such policies which makes the execution of union regulations pertaining to the abolition, promotion and payment of helpers distinctly different from the enforcement of most union regulations. Rules, such for example as those having to do with hours of labor and the sanitary conditions of the shops concern

17 In interviews with employers in different trades quite a number of them emphasized this point.



directly two classes only, the employes (as a body) and the employers. The extent of the enforcement of these rules is the resultant of two , more or less, contending forces. On the other hand, the extent of the enforcement of a rule pertaining to assistant workmen is the resultant of three distinct forces. Obviously, the outcome in one case may be radically different from the outcome in the other. To illustrate, if a local union in any trade demands an increase of ten per cent in wages the success of their demand will depend upon the views of the employers as to the justness of the increase and upon the comparative strength of the employes and the employers. But if the same union demands that helpers must be confined to such and such work, the securing of their demand may be rendered less certain by reason of the fact that both employers and helpers oppose it.

It is natural that every workman should seek to obtain labor which will bring him , other things being equal, the greatest money return in proportion to the labor expended. Therefore, every helper seeks opportunity for advancement in his trade or industry. If the employer offers him a position which carries with it a larger wage than he has been accustomed to receive, he will in all likelihood be anxious to grasp the opportunity. Especially will he be inclined to do this if by so doing he gets rid of doing unskilled work. If the journeymen go on a strike to enforce the rule that helpers shall be confined to helpers' work and never be promoted to journeymanship, those helpers who are semi-skilled mechanics will likely act as strike breakers, for such an occasion presents them with a rare opportunity

for rapid promotion. Especially if the helper is not organized in connection with the journeymen, will he be likely to disregard entirely the welfare of the union mechanics.

Journeyman engaged in piece work may establish a standard rate for the payment of helpers, but the helper himself is an important factor in determining the effective-ness of the prescribed wage. As was pointed out in Chapter II, neither the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers nor the potters have ever been able to satisfactorily carry out their regulations on this point. In fact, it is more difficult to enforce a prescribed wage for helpers than it is for employers to enforce their wage scale for journeymen. The journeymen are never sure of the net earnings of their employers, and therefore do not know just what amount can be forced from them in wages. On the contrary, helpers know the standard rate of pay for journeymen, and are always ready to claim for themselves a larger share than what the mechanics think they should have.

As in the case of wages, so in that of organization, the helper often stands in the way of the enforcement of the journeymen's policies. As already pointed out, in most unions composed of mechanics and helpers, the mechanics are given a decidedly controlling influence. To this, many helpers object, and refuse to ally themselves with an organization wherein their rights and privileges are curtailed. They prefer to be deprived of union advantages rather than suffer what they consider tyrannical rule under the journeymen. In 1912, when the Boiler Makers at their International Convention, were planning to abolish helpers' local unions and make the helpers eligible for membership in the

journeymens' lodges, the question of the status of the helpers under the new arrangement was sprung. It was proposed that helpers be not eligible for the offices of president and business agent to which proposal the helpers energetically protested. One of their leaders, delegate Souder, said, if there was so much opposition to the helpers holding office that he for one did not want to be taken in with the Boiler Makers.¹⁸

The Iron, Steel and Tin Workers at an early date in their history, made provisions for the helpers to come into the union unhampered by any restrictions upon their progress. But the helpers in all cases did not avail themselves of this extended privilege and at the present time many helpers are non-union men. This may be partly due to the facts that many helpers are but temporary workmen in the industry and others are foreigners who do not speak the English language, yet doubtless the system of employment and payment of helpers by the journeymen has contributed much to the unwillingness of the auxiliary workmen to be organized with the mechanics. This form of organization is distasteful to helpers just as it would be distasteful to the journeymen to organize in conjunction with their employers and allow them to take the lead in all important matters. Thus it is seen that insistence on one policy with respect to helpers often prevents the enforcement of another.

The second obstacle to the enforcement of union policies is the possibility that strict enforcement will tend to fill and to create non-union shops. This question was dealt with in a previous

chapter, and need not receive more than a passing notice at this point. Sufficth to say that if union restrictions upon helpers are especially galling, that those helpers who become semi-skilled or efficient workmen will seek employment in non-union shops. This increase of non-union men and men who are willing to become non-unionists, will be conducive to the creation of other non-union establishments, which in turn will prove detrimental to unionism.

The third obstacle to the carrying out of union policies, the extension of unionism, is x very closely connected with that of the creation of non-union shops. Helpers in union shops go into non-union territory and secure employment as journeymen. Later, when the union seeks to extend its jurisdiction to these new fields it can well pursue no other policy than to take in all workmen found engaged as mechanics. The Secretary of the Tile Layers, for instance, told the writer that in 1913, he organized a lodge of tile layers at Dayton, Ohio, and that every member of that lodge had formerly been a helper in some other territory, but had never before been recognized by the union as competent mechanics. This same self interest may force a union to disregard its policy in individual cases, where a helper neither goes into a non-union shop nor into a new locality. If a helper is promoted contrary to union regulations and the conditions are such that the local lodge does not wish to resort to strenuous measures to prevent or to nulify such promotion, it must of necessity in order to maintain its strength and its jurisdiction over the work claimed, extend the privileges of membership to the helper thus

promoted to journeymanship.

The fourth obstacle to the enforcement of union helper policies is the difficulty of drawing a line between the work of the helper and that of the mechanic. In some trades there is a very specific and somewhat a natural division of work. In the blowing of glass bottles, for instance, there is no difficulty in determining the respective duties of a journeyman and a mold boy. In trades, however, it is well nigh impossible to tell just where the work of the assistant ends and that of the mechanic begins. Such is the case in a machine or a blacksmith shop where the nature of the work prevents the establishment of well defined jurisdictional lines between the work of journeymen and auxiliary workmen. Rules to the effect that helpers must be kept at helpers work are difficult to enforce. The result is usually a gradual encroachment of the auxiliary work upon the indefinitely defined work of the journeymen.

This encroachment is much enhanced when shop conditions are rapidly changing, by reason of the introduction of new processes of work and of new machinery. If a new machine replacing hand work is introduced into a shop, the question will arise is the promotion of an auxiliary workman to the operating of this new machine, a violation of union policies and of union agreements with employers that helpers must not be promoted to mechanics' work. The unions almost invariably claim that the operation of the machine belongs to the duties of the workmen whom the machine has displaced. On the contrary, the employers may desire to have the machine operated by a less skilled man, more than

likely, a former helper, who is willing to work for less than the minimum union rate for journeymen. The usual result, as has been shown in the case of the machinist, is to force the union to extend its jurisdiction to all the work of the shop, and thus to open its doors to workmen who have hitherto been declared ineligible for union membership. In this way the policy of the union, both respect to the promotion and to the organization of helpers are violated or materially changed.

The fifth obstacle to the enforcement of union rules forbidding the promotion of helpers and their entrance into a union as journeymen, is that non-enforcement in one locality may thwart enforcement in another. In this respect the execution of a trade entrance requirement is different from the carrying out of other union policies. To illustrate, if a national union declare an eight hour working rule for all its members, and if one lodge does not enforce this policy, the reaction of the failure upon other lodges is of little importance. The lodge not enforcing the rule is the one which suffer from the non-enforcement. On the other hand, if a national union pass a rule that no helper shall be promoted to journeymanship, nor to membership as a mechanic, and if one local union violate this rule, its force may be destroyed in other lodges. This is done by a simple transfer of membership.

Finally, the decay of the apprentice system is an obstacle to the execution of union helper policies, especially the policy of absolute prohibition upon the promotion of helpers. It is not our purpose here to enter into a detailed discussion of the disappearance of this system of training mechanics. Sufficeth to say that with the coming of the modern industrial system, apprentices have rapidly disappeared,

though the name still survives, and as has been seen is uniformly applied to various classes of auxiliary workmen. Since apprentices are few in American trades, the ranks of mechanics must be filled from other sources, one of the most fruitful of which in certain trades is the group of auxiliary workers employed therein.

II

MEANS AND METHODS OF ENFORCEMENT.

Since there are three voluntary interested factors, viz: mechanics, helpers and employers, who may as groups or as individuals be responsible for the non-enforcement of union policies pertaining to auxiliary workmen, pressure may be brought to bear upon one or all of these factors, in order to secure the execution of rules designed to put such policies into effect.

Unions have variously prescribed fines, suspension or expulsion for those journeymen violating regulations which have to do with auxiliary workmen. As a rule penalties laid down so specifically are never imposed upon offending members. To show why this is not done it is necessary to examine into the probable effects of the strict execution of such penalty prescribing rules. Let us take first a rule of the electrical workers, local number 28, of Baltimore, that a wireman will not be allowed to work for anyone who employs more than the prescribed ratio of helpers to wireman under a penalty of a five dollars fine for each offense.¹⁹ If a local union be too weak to force an employer to yield to its working rules, it is not likely that any

¹⁹ Constitution, Local Union 28, Sec. 61

attempt will be made to punish a wireman for violating the above regulation. Forcing a member to quit an employer rather than work where too many helpers are employed might mean unemployment for the union men in that shop and certainly it would mean the transforming of a shop into a strictly non-union establishment. Only in a case where other shops were wanting workmen and were willing to abide by union rules, could a local lodge afford to thus force its members to quit an employer and give the shops wherein they have been employed over to non-union ranks. In all other cases, the remedy would be worse than the disease, therefore, it would not be applied. In short, unless there is a great demand for workmen in a trade, a union could not afford to force its members out of a shop which the union itself could not control

But if the punishment were imposed as prescribed, journeymen might prefer to forfeit their union membership rather than to be forced into unemployment. Craftsmen join trade unions because of the benefits they hope to obtain thereby, and when these benefits in their eyes become a negative quantity, they do not hesitate to sever their union affiliations. This danger of driving workmen into non-union ranks certainly has a restraining influence when a local lodge comes to the consideration of punishing a member for the violation of a rule which the lodge cannot enforce through pressure on the employers.

Likewise, if journeymen voluntarily and independently of any initiative on the part of employers, desire either from selfish or benevolent motives to disregard the laws of their lodge, the restraining force is not great. In the first place, evasion of regulations

is often easy ^{and} journeymen do just about as they would if no regulations existed. For instance, in Tile laying only two men , a journeyman and his helper, usually work on a job and it is never known to others whether the journeyman keeps his helper at helper's work, as that work is defined by the union. In the second place, just as in the case where employers press mechanics into a violation of union rules fear of driving journeymen out of the association thus adding to the non-union ranks and giving the employers greater bargaining power, prevents a strict execution of rules. In the third place, mechanics in assemblies under the guidance of a few leaders, often for the moment become very unselfish and vote for resolutions which impose upon themselves restrictions which are supposed to be for the ultimate advantage of the union, and therefore, for its individual members. When the test comes, however, journeymen as individuals are not ready to sacrifice temporary advantages, financial or otherwise, for the future betterment of the craft. as a whole, and violate the rules which they helped to make. The reports of the officers in certain trades are full of complaints that local unions do not enforce the national regulations concerning the helpers, but since this has been previously referred to, illustrations at this point are unnecessary. When a rule is somewhat universally ignored, its enforcement through punishment on members is not attempted.

In trades where helpers are unorganized there is little or no pressure that can be brought to bear on them by the unions to secure

conformity to their helper regulations. The auxiliary workmen being independent of the unions do not fear the loss of union privileges and benefits, nor do they yield to appeals for the support of labor as opposed to capitalism. In matters of a common interest appeals to unorganized helpers based on loyalty to labor usually has weight, but appeals of this nature which have for their purpose the subjugation of those to whom the appeals are made usually falls on deaf ears.

If helpers are organized in some relation to the journeymen or even independent of the journeymen there is a possibility that the fear of the loss of journeymen's support may prevail upon helpers to be somewhat cautious in giving courtesy to the rules of the union of which they are a part or upon which they rely for support. Sometimes helpers will enter into agreements with journeymen which retard the advancement of the helpers. For example, the Mosaic and Encaustic Tile Layers and the Hexagon Labor Club of the Tile Layers' Helpers made the following agreements: "A member of the Hexagon Labor Club shall accompany a tile layer on all jobs within a radius of twenty miles of the city under the penalty of \$25.00 for the first offense and \$50.00 for the second offense, each job worked without a member of the Hexagon Labor Club to be an offense. Also the helper will not be allowed to handle tools, to lay tile or brace up facings under similar penalties. No strike shall be ordered on account of this agreement until after a conference with a committee of the bosses."

Organized helpers by limiting their membership and securing

the assistance of strong local unions of mechanics in enforcing the closed shop, may obtain advantage which offset restrictions upon their promotion." However, experience in most trades shows that as a rule when chances for promotion come to helpers that they will accept them and risk the consequences. Therefore, pressure upon helpers by organized journeymen is little relied upon for the carrying out of union policies relating to auxiliary workmen.

Unions in their endeavors to enforce their helper regulations bring pressure to bear chiefly upon the employers, for here in the last analysis is the real test of all such rules. The means and methods employed are not materially different from those used to obtain concessions on other matters. Strikes against the employment and promotion of helpers have been numerous in many trades. However, in many cases the efficacy of the strike as a means of enforcing regulations restricting the helper is not great because such auxiliary workmen are often able to take the place of the strikers, thus thwarting them in the accomplishment of their purpose.

In recent years, especially since many helpers have been organized, forcible measures of restricting them have in the main been abandoned. In practically all the unions wherein the helper is an important factor, endeavors are now made to secure as nearly as possible the unions' ideal policies through agreements between the unions and the employers.

Because the trade entrance practice of one local union may destroy the force of the trade entrance policy of other local unions most national trade unions have either taken away or never granted to

to local lodges the right to make their helper and apprentice rules. The weak point in this policy is that it is no less difficult to secure through the agency of local unions the uniform enforcement of a national rule than it is to secure uniform legislation through the same agencies. For this reason a few national unions have gone so far as to prescribe penalties for the infringement of national regulations pertaining to trade entrance. Thus the Machinist in 1909, for the purpose of checking the promotion of helpers, made the following rule: "Members introducing any person or persons other than a member of the International Association into the trade shall be fined heavily for the first offense and expelled for the second. This action shall not be construed to refer to apprentices properly indentured²¹." As in the case of national trade entrance requirements, so in the case of rules prescribing punishment for non-conformity to such requirements the infliction of punishment must be left to local unions and as we have seen the extent to which it is possible for a local lodge to enforce these rules depends largely on forces beyond the control of the unions.

Failure of a local union to carry out the mandates of the national association sometimes gives rise to rules providing for penalties on those local unions not enforcing helper and apprentice regulations. In 1896, inasmuch as local lodges had almost universally failed to execute the provisions of the Brotherhood of Plumbers with respect to helpers and apprentices, the National Association added the

21 Subordinate Lodge Constitution, 1909, Art VI, Sec. 8

clause to its constitution: "Any local union failing to enforce these laws after said date shall for the first offense be fined \$50.00 and after four weeks if not enforced shall forfeit their charter in the United Association."²² At the next annual convention only two local unions claimed to have lived up to the rules this clause was designed to enforce.²³ From Massachusetts, it was reported that two lodges had attempted to carry out to a letter the regulations of the national body. These two went out on a strike and now appealed to the National Association for financial assistance.²⁴ Needless to say the charges were not revoked, for such a course would have meant the destruction of the Association. The union thus came to a recognition of the fact that it is not possible to secure National uniformity in these matters.

22 See Constitution, 1897, Art XV. Sec. 7.

23 Proceedings, 1897, P. 68.

24 Ibid, P. 71.

Biography

John H. Ashworth, the author of this dissertation, was born in Bland County, Virginia, October 19, 1879. He received his elementary and high school education in the public schools of his native county. At the age of eighteen he began teaching in the rural schools of Virginia and continued in this work for four years. In the fall 1901 he entered Emory and Henry College from which institution he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1906. For the session of 1906-07 he was principal of the high school at Wise, Virginia. In 1907 he was appointed to a similar position in the Norton High School, Norton, Virginia where he remained until 1911 when he resigned to enter the Johns Hopkins University as a graduate student in political economy. During 1911-12 he held a Virginia scholarship in this University. For the session 1912-13 he was fellow in his department and in 1913-14 was fellow by courtesy. His subordinate subjects were political science and history.





